

# EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

**YOUR EL PASO**  
MASTER PLAN



El Paso County  
COLORADO

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 23, 2019



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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

*Your El Paso Master Plan* is a new and all-inclusive planning document for El Paso County, Colorado. The Master Plan will establish the priorities, projects, and recommendations for the County's future, as its population and their needs shift and change over time. Join us in this important planning process, as we learn more about the diverse area that is El Paso County, and its unique opportunities and challenges. The *Existing Conditions Report* is a preliminary step in the process to create *Your El Paso Master Plan*.

## Purpose

The *Existing Conditions Report* is a summary of the present conditions in El Paso County. The purpose of the collecting and reporting on local conditions is to gain insight into the issues and opportunities that must be addressed by the new Master Plan. The report is organized into the following sections:

- Existing County Development;
- Transportation and Mobility;
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure;
- Military Base Compatibility;
- Recreation and Tourism;
- Community Health and Sustainability; and
- Resiliency and Hazard Mitigation.

As per Colorado Revised Statutes (§ 30-28-106 and § 31-23-206), the ability for a community to adopt a Master Plan rests with the Planning Commission. The Master Plan adoption process must include public hearings, and public comments should be considered throughout the process of developing the plan. Thus, the planning process relies on this collection of background information, from public forums and surveys, inventories and data analyses, to support the ultimate goals, objectives, and recommendations formed in the plan.

The content in the *Existing Conditions Report* is based on information from a variety of sources. Local data is provided by El Paso County government, and other information on existing conditions is collected from state or federal data resources (as cited). However, a key source for the upfront analysis is obtained from public feedback, which is a core part of the planning process.

## Planning Process

*Your El Paso Master Plan* is guided by the following multi-step planning process to both fulfill the Colorado statutory requirements and meet El Paso County's community objectives. The process is designed to result in the creation of a modern, cohesive, and community-driven plan, which will serve as an advisory document for decision-making for years to come. The planning process includes the following steps:

### Step 1: Project Initiation (complete)

– To start the planning process, meetings were held with a variety of groups to refine, finalize, and initiate the work to create the Master Plan. This step included meetings with El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department staff and other County department heads, the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission, and the specially-appointed El Paso County Master Plan Advisory Committee.

### Step 2: Community Outreach and Engagement (ongoing)

– Citizen participation has thus far included diverse public engagement opportunities, with events held at various locations around the County. Further detail on Community Outreach is provided in the next section.

**Step 3: Market and Demographic Analysis (ongoing)**

– The Demographic, Market & Housing Profile for El Paso County provides valuable insight into the County through summaries of technical information related to population trends; an overview of housing conditions; and a broad assessment of the retail, office, and industrial market conditions. A county-wide profile is different than one for a municipality, such as a city or town. The geographic area is significantly larger which affects market composition. A market area such as Colorado Springs for example will absorb much of the potential within an area extending beyond the city's borders including that of outlying smaller communities. Therefore, the potential within smaller rural towns will be more limited. Other factors and variables such as consumer expenditures related to retail, housing product and price, demand for industrial and office space will differ throughout a county dependent on location. The analyses is conducted at a higher level to account for greater changes and variations in the demographic makeup of the population.

**Step 4: Existing Conditions Analysis (ongoing)**

– This step includes the production of the Existing Conditions Report. The report is compiled through review of the County's past studies, plans, and reports, current zoning and development controls, existing land use and development, public facilities, infrastructure, transportation, recreation options, and many other important County features to contribute to the development of the Master Plan.

**Step 5: Vision, Goals and Objectives (upcoming)**

– This step will establish the vision for the future of El Paso County and will guide all subsequent planning activities. Goals and objectives that align with the plan vision will lead the way forward for each plan component, supported by community feedback, existing conditions research and assessment, and the guidance of the Master Plan Advisory Committee.

**Step 6: Place Types and Key Plan Components (upcoming)**

– “Place types” identified for specific areas across El Paso County will provide the foundation for visualization of planning concepts and will assist in the organization of plan content that is applicable across a vast and diverse county. The key elements of the plan will also be identified at this stage to provide the structure for upcoming draft plan chapters. As per Colorado Revised Statutes (§ 30-28-106 and § 31-23-206), a master plan in Colorado must contain a recreational and tourism component. Other key plan elements are determined at this stage.

**Step 7: County-Wide Plans and Policies (upcoming)**

– At this step, preliminary draft plans will be developed for each key plan component that reflect community input and all previous steps and activities in the planning process. The draft plan components will be highly illustrative, concise, easy to read, and effectively integrate the vision, goals and objectives identified during the planning process.

**Step 8: Implementation Strategy (upcoming)**

– The Implementation Strategy will be a catalog of the specific actions required to carry out the new Master Plan. A key part of the implementation strategy is a clear “action agenda”, which will identify the key projects and actions to be undertaken, roles and responsibilities, strategic partnerships, funding, timing, and more. The action agenda serves as the “check list” for the County's overall Master Plan implementation strategy.

**Step 9: Plan Document and Adoption (upcoming)**

– Based on the eight previous steps, the draft and final versions of the Master Plan will be prepared for local review and consideration. This includes the public hearing, plan adoption, and presentation to the El Paso County Planning Commission.



## Community Outreach

From March 2019 until the completion of this report, the extensive community outreach process for *Your El Paso Master Plan* continues to generate a wealth of comments and public feedback. From March through July 2019, 10 community workshops, held at various locations throughout the County, and three business workshops, held at three different chamber of commerce locations, opened up discussion about the issues and opportunities in El Paso County. The County's planning staff manned a booth at El Paso County Fair from July 13th through the 20th to collect youth questionnaires and introduce fair attendees to the Master Plan project.

Key person interviews and focus group discussions produced conversations on diverse topics such as economic development, regional transportation, residential development, military compatibility, utilities, land conservation, natural resources, and emergency services.

Other engagement efforts have included an interactive project website, online questionnaires for residents and business owners, and map.social – an online community issues mapping tool. El Paso County staff have also promoted the events and online materials to the community using many means of spreading the word about the Master Plan process, such as social media, advertisements, and press releases.

The community outreach process for *Your El Paso Master Plan* has thus far engaged over 2,700 respondents. Summaries for each section in this report reflect public feedback collected throughout the process.

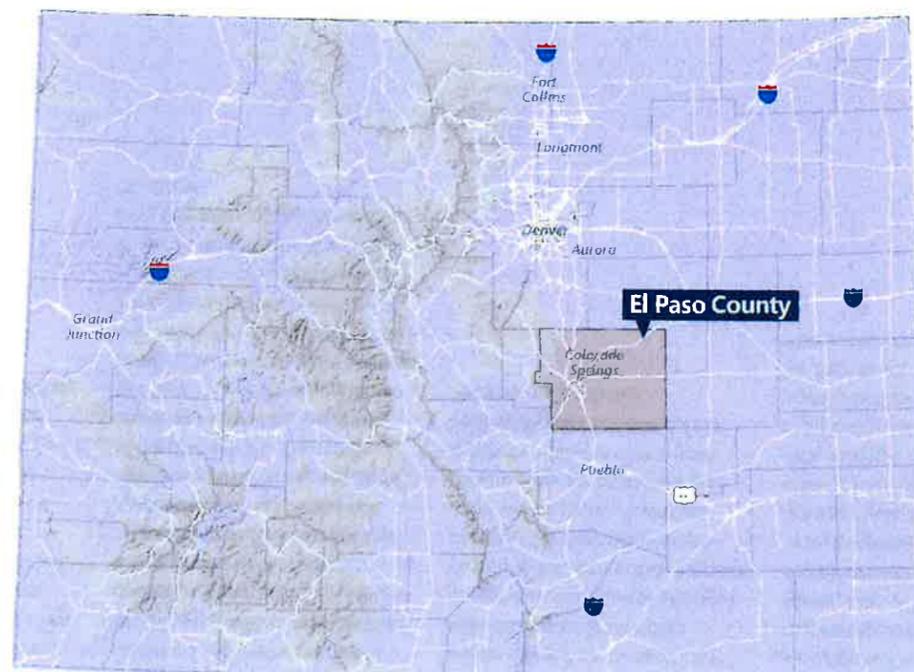
## Regional Context

In terms of population size, El Paso County is the second largest county in the State of Colorado with 713,856 residents, including all incorporated and unincorporated areas (as per U.S. Census 2018 Population Estimates). It is second only to Denver County, which has 716,492 residents. The County spans 2,130 square miles, and contains eight incorporated communities, as follows:

- City of Colorado Springs (pop. 472,688);
- City of Fountain (pop. 30,454);
- Town of Monument (pop. 8,010);
- City of Manitou Springs (pop. 5,346);
- Town of Palmer Lake (pop. 2,772);
- Town of Calhan (pop. 834);
- Town of Green Mountain Falls (pop. 706); and
- Town of Ramah (pop. 129).

Unincorporated areas in El Paso County have an estimated 192,917 residents.

El Paso County is in central Colorado, bordered by Douglas County to the north, Elbert County to the north and east, Lincoln County to the east, Pueblo County to the south, and Teller and Fremont Counties to the west. The Front Range of the Southern Rocky Mountains runs along the western edge of the county and features Pikes Peak, the highest summit of the southern Front Range at 14,115 feet (4,302 m) in elevation. Interstate 25 passes through the county from north to south along the east side of the Front Range. The City of Colorado Springs is the second largest city in Colorado, and the Colorado Springs Municipal Airport (COS) is located just to its southeast. Military installations in El Paso County include Fort Carson, the US Air Force Academy, Peterson and Schriever Air Force Bases, and Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station.



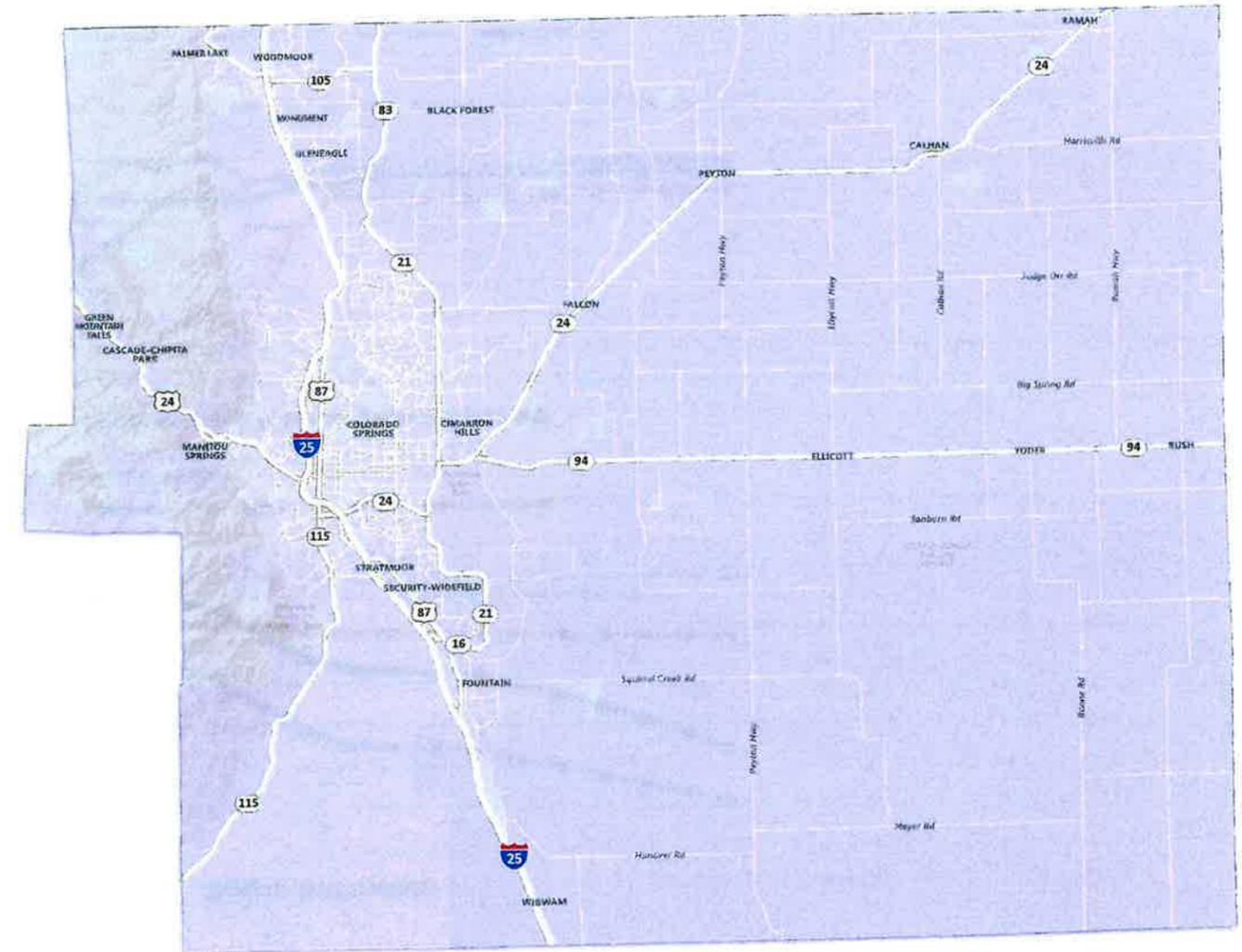
## El Paso County Places

Although it spans across a large, diverse territory, El Paso County is made up of communities and areas of interest that are interconnected. Whether related by their mountainous landscapes, rolling plains, growing neighborhoods, or rural connections, residents from every corner of El Paso County share something in common with their neighbors. We asked youths at the County Fair to weigh in and describe El Paso County in just one word. Their responses are a reminder of a chief purpose of the Master Plan, to find these commonalities, to champion El Paso County as a great place to live and to grow up, and to build a shared vision for the future.

*Your El Paso Master Plan* is a comprehensive document for the entire County and the highly valued communities and places within its borders. Apart from incorporated cities and towns like Colorado Springs, Fountain, Monument, Manitou Springs, and others, parts of El Paso County also include established places or communities that are unincorporated. In some cases, these places are census designated areas.

El Paso County places, with American Community Survey 5-Year 2017 Population Estimates where available, include:

- Gleneagle (pop. 6,706);
- Woodmoor (pop. 9,264);
- Black Forest (pop. 14,188);
- Peyton (pop. 254);
- Falcon;
- Cimarron Hills (pop. 17,744);
- Ellicott (pop. 809);
- Yoder;
- Rush;
- Security-Widefield (pop. 37,325);
- Stratmoor (pop. 5,763);
- Wigwam; and
- Cascade-Chipita Park (pop. 1,334).



## Demographics

The following section describes the basic demographic characteristics of El Paso County, utilizing the most current, relevant data sources. Where appropriate, the County's characteristics are compared to neighboring Douglas and Pueblo Counties as well as the State of Colorado as a whole. Douglas and Pueblo County were chosen for several reasons including their immediate proximity to El Paso County and their position on Interstate 25, provides access to the Colorado region. Similarly, their growth patterns over the past 90 years coincide with those of El Paso at specific points in time. For some datasets in this section, comparisons are minimal as the data for Douglas and/or Pueblo County shows little variation. In those instances, information is shown only for El Paso County.

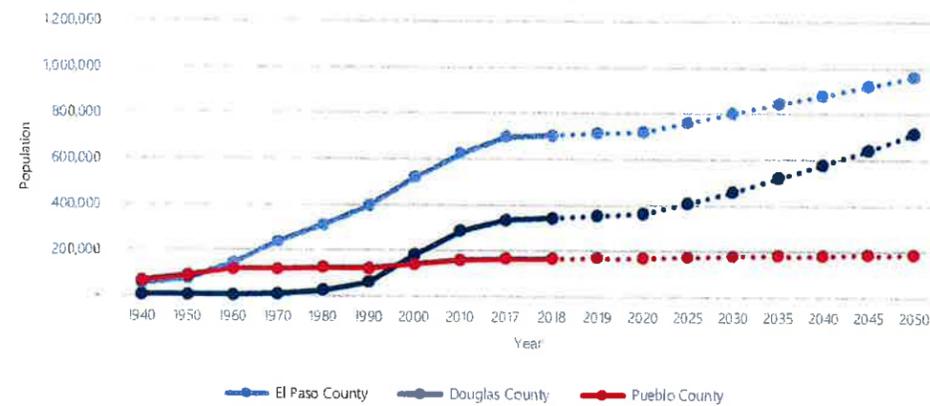
**Note:** projections made for each dataset (population, age, income, etc.) throughout the Demographics section come from Woods & Poole, a nationally renowned demographic and economic statistics firm. The projections are based in historical data (dating back to 1970 or earlier) for every county in the United States. The model that is used to create the projections is run simultaneously for every county. Similarly, the model is updated annually to reflect the most-recent trends.

## Population

El Paso County is the second largest county in Colorado by population. The County accounts for 12.5 percent of the State's total population, slightly up from 12 percent in 2000.

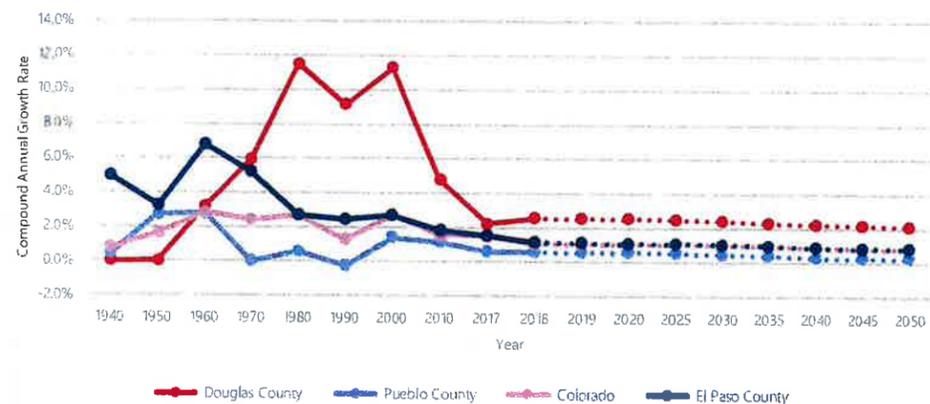
- El Paso County's population has experienced significant growth since 1940, increasing by an average of over 74,200 residents every decade between 1940 and 2010. The County has grown by over 80,000 between 2010 and 2017.
- El Paso County's average population growth by decade is more than double that of Douglas County's.
- El Paso County's compound annual growth rate (CAGR), the annual distribution of change (growth or decline) in a community over a specific time period, has fluctuated each decade but has been consistently above one percent since 1940, which is higher than Colorado. Douglas County however has experienced greater compound annual growth due to a significant influx in population from 1970-2000.
- Pueblo County has been stable since 2000 and is expected to remain that way through 2050.
- El Paso County is projected to reach nearly one million people by 2050, an increase of 256,000 from 2019. The State is projected to gain two million people over the same time period, of which El Paso County's growth will account for 13 percent. While some of the projected growth can be accommodated in Colorado Springs, the largest municipality in the County (472,688 population) and potentially other annexed areas, many of the new residents will be in unincorporated County areas, which will need to be effectively directed and managed to prevent an overburdening of the County's infrastructure and services systems.

Change in Total Population



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

Population Change by Compound Annual Growth Rate



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

### Age Distribution

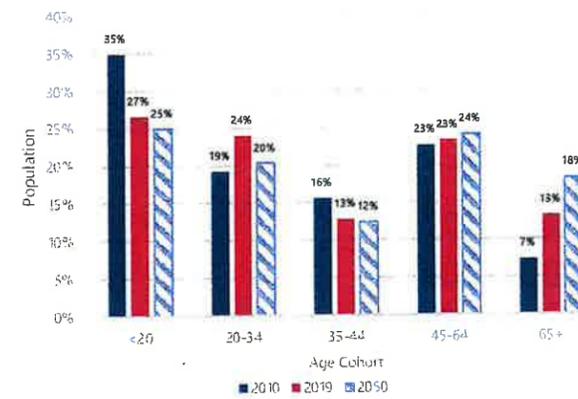
- El Paso County's population has experienced a shift from younger to older overall from 2010-2019, with the under 20 age group declining by eight percent and the 65 and older (senior) group growing by six percent.
- The 20-34 age group (young professionals) has grown significantly since 2010.

- El Paso County and the comparison communities experienced the greatest decline in CAGR in the under 20 age group from 2010-2019 and greatest rate of growth in the 65+ age group. El Paso County had the highest number of net births (41,929) from 2010-2017 but only an annual growth in the under 20 age cohort of .5 percent. Over the same time period the County experienced a net in-migration of 50,830, which is higher than net births.

- When compared to the nation, El Paso is basically on par with age trends with the under 20 age group projected to decline and the 65 and over age group projected to increase. When analyzing the working-age population (roughly 20-64), El Paso falls significantly below the nation's projection. In 2050, 56 percent of the County's population falls within this group but the United States' population is expected to be 77 percent. However, El Paso is more in line with the State (57 percent), Douglas County (54 percent), and Pueblo County (52 percent).

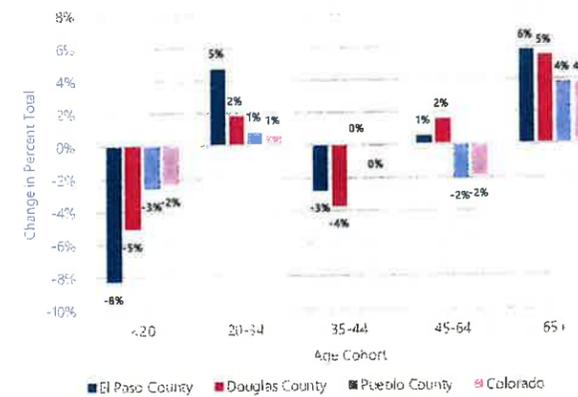
- Projected through 2050, the senior group is expected to experience the greatest annual growth, which is likely correlated to the continued in-migration of older residents as well as more existing residents aging. Inverse to the last decade, the 20-34 age group in El Paso County is projected to experience the smallest growth. The projections by Woods & Poole are calculated for all counties in the country at the same time to ensure that growth or decline incorporated equally and effectively. Similarly, a large percentage of the new growth in this age group across the State is being driven to the counties in the Denver metro area, which includes Douglas County. However, this is not to say that young professionals will not continue to still be an important population group, in El Paso County over the next 30 years.

El Paso County Percentage Age Distribution



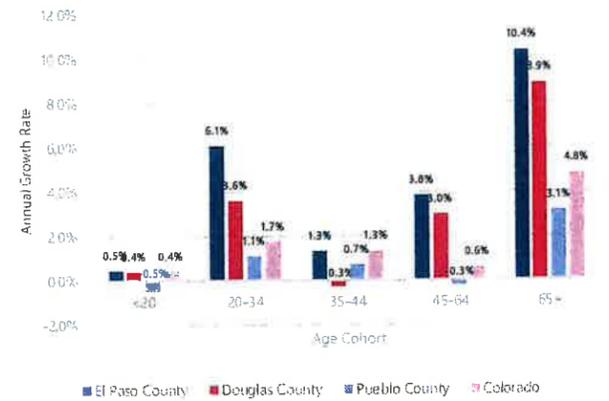
Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

Age Cohort Percentage Change (2010-2019)



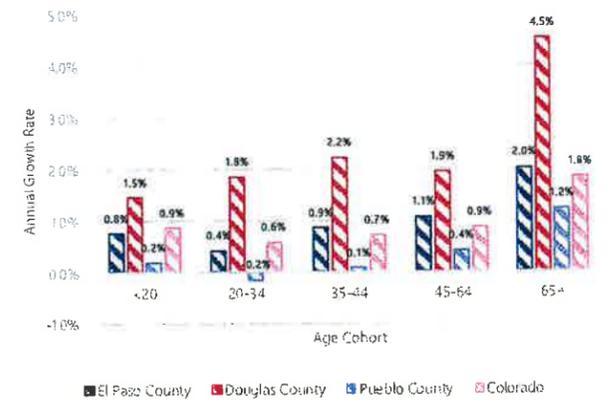
Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

Age Distribution CAGR (2010-2019)



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

Age Distribution Projected CAGR (2019-2050)



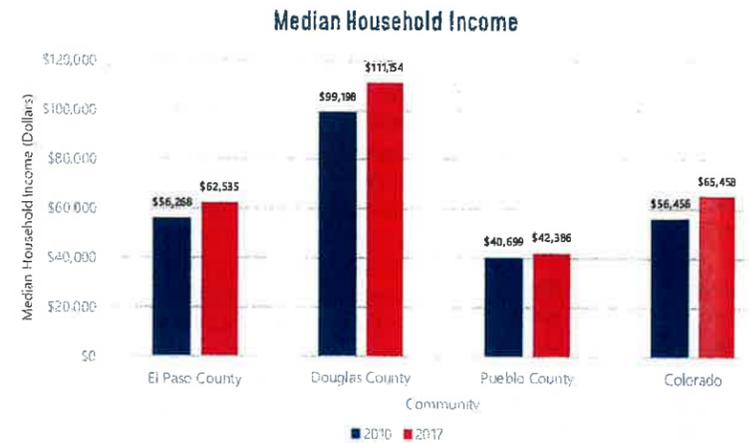
Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

## Household Income

- According to data from the American Community Survey, the purveyor of most recent data available for median household incomes, the median household income has grown by 11 percent in El Paso County between 2010 and 2017, exceeding the 2017 inflation of 2.13 percent. El Paso County's median income is close to the overall median income for the State but only 56 percent of Douglas County's indicating that households in Douglas earn higher incomes overall.
- Even though Douglas County's median income is significantly higher than El Paso County's, Douglas County was the only community to increase its share of low-income households.

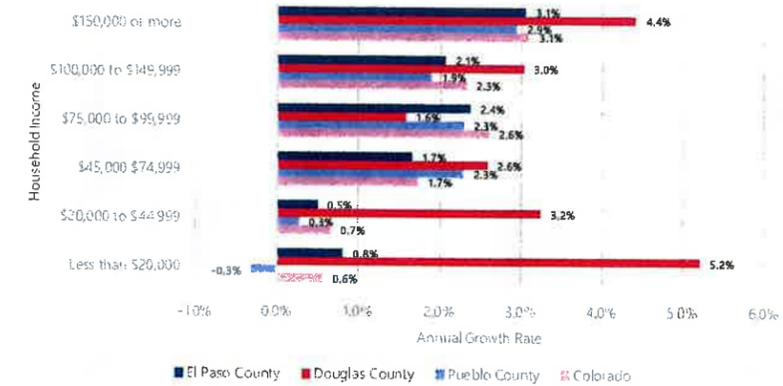
- Since 2010, El Paso County has experienced its greatest growth in households with annual incomes greater than \$150,000. This also true for Pueblo County and the State, which suggests a couple points: one being that El Paso County is becoming increasingly more attractive to higher-income households and another is that existing households are experiencing increases in their incomes. Household incomes have also been growing at a rate where a larger segment of the population is entering into the higher income category.

- Projections through 2050 indicate that these trends will continue in El Paso County with increases only in households earning incomes greater than \$74,999. Households with higher incomes correlate to greater spending power and increases in retail spending and more importantly a desire for higher-quality goods and services, both public and private.



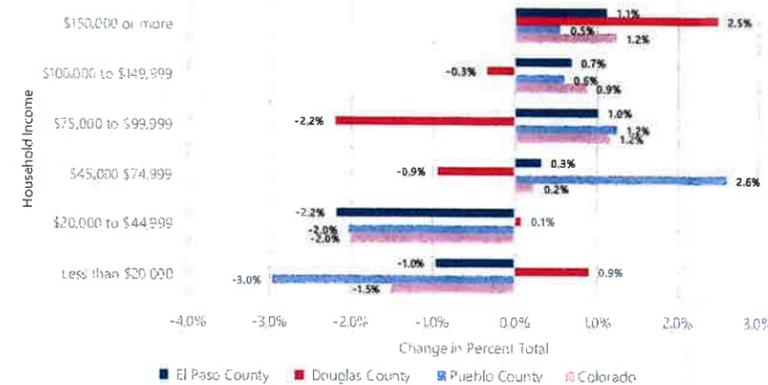
Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

## Compound Annual Growth Rate (2010-2019)



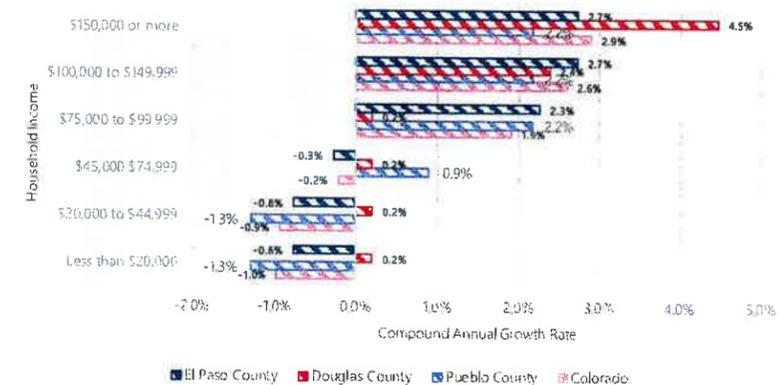
Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

## Household Income Percentage Change (2010-2019)



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

## Compound Annual Growth Rate (2019-2050)



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

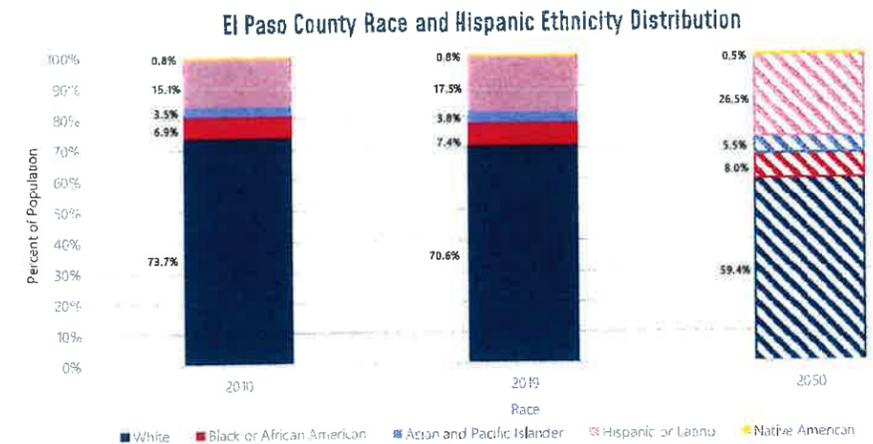
### Race and Ethnicity

- El Paso County is majority white as defined by the U.S. Census; however, the population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse largely due to the increase of the Hispanic population in the County.
- This trend is projected to continue through 2050, with the Hispanic population accounting for one quarter of the County's total population. Note that the U.S. Census defines Hispanic as an ethnicity and not a race. Thus, a person of any race may also identify as Hispanic.

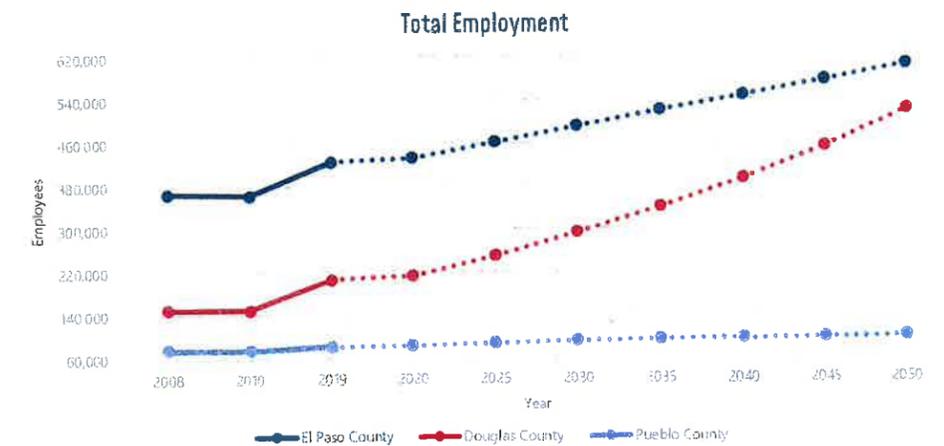
### Employment

- El Paso County maintains a diverse economy with significant employers in a wide range of sectors and no single industry accounting for a majority of the County's employment base.
- Total employment in El Paso County has steadily increased since 2010 and now significantly exceeds prerecession levels. Between 2008 and 2010, El Paso County lost a total of 3,638 jobs representing a decrease of about one percent. The County and the State of Colorado as a whole were less effected by the recession than the rest of the country, which lost roughly five percent of the population.
- Douglas and Pueblo counties have experienced employment growth as well since the recession, however Douglas County's has seen greater percentage growth than both Pueblo and El Paso.
- The majority of El Paso County's job gains since 2010 were in four sectors: Health Care and Social Assistance (+11,855 jobs), Accommodation and Food Services (+2,040 jobs), Construction (+8,432 jobs), and Retail Trade (+6,543 jobs).
- The U.S. Military has had a continued significant presence in El Paso County with five installations employing over 37,000 people (8.7 percent of the County's workforce), even though the sector lost 2,049 jobs from 2010-2019. Similarly, this sector is only expected to gain approximately 460 new jobs from 2019-2050.
- Overall, El Paso County is projected to gain 174,578 jobs from 2019-2050, a growth of 41 percent, indicating the continuing strength of the County's economy. The County's total population is expected to gain nearly 250,000 people during that same time period, indicating that, if workforce eligible, all of the new jobs could be filled by County residents.

- Healthcare and Social Assistance is projected to gain the most jobs through 2050 (50,735) as well as remain the largest employment sector in the County (15 percent). Manufacturing is projected to lose 3,600 jobs over the same time period, the industry with the greatest decrease.
- Unemployment has decreased since 2010 in both El Paso County and the State with a rate of 6.8 and 5.2 percent respectively.



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

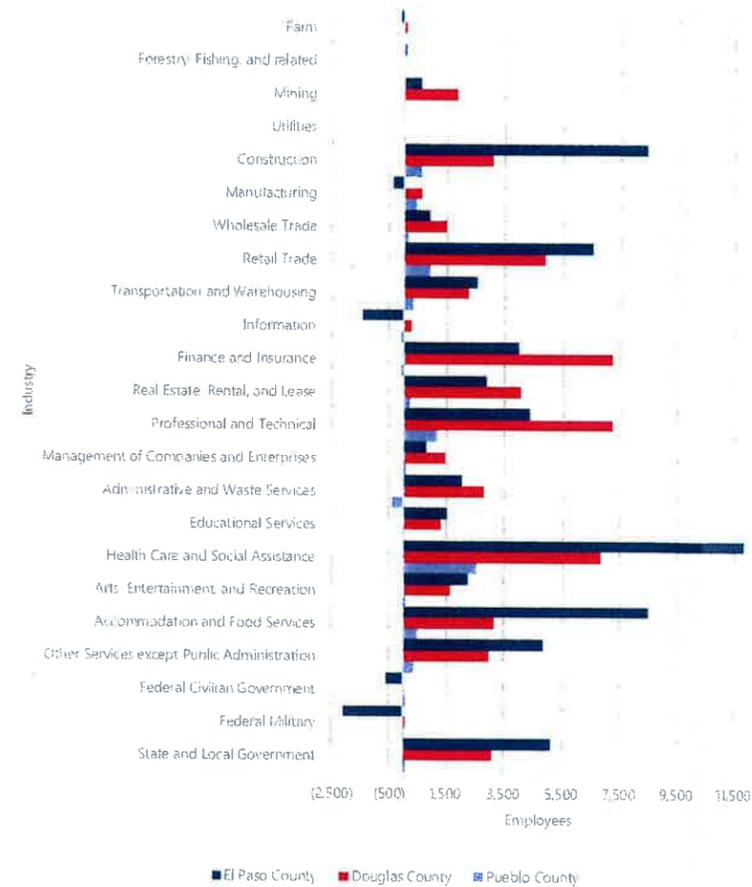


Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

<b>Employment by Industry</b>		
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Farm	1,299	0.3%
Forestry, Fishing, and related	447	0.1%
Mining	2,184	0.5%
Utilities	622	0.1%
Construction	26,485	6.2%
Manufacturing	13,334	3.1%
Wholesale Trade	6,913	1.6%
Retail Trade	42,405	10.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	7,771	1.8%
Information	7,065	1.7%
Finance and Insurance	24,717	5.8%
Real Estate, Rental, and Lease	19,596	4.6%
Professional and Technical	35,235	8.3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,986	0.5%
Administrative and Waste Services	25,413	6.0%
Educational Services	9,229	2.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	41,839	9.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	10,614	2.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	33,479	7.9%
Other Services except Public Administration	23,347	5.5%
Federal Civilian Government	12,263	2.9%
Federal Military	37,086	8.7%
State and Local Government	40,099	9.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>425,447</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

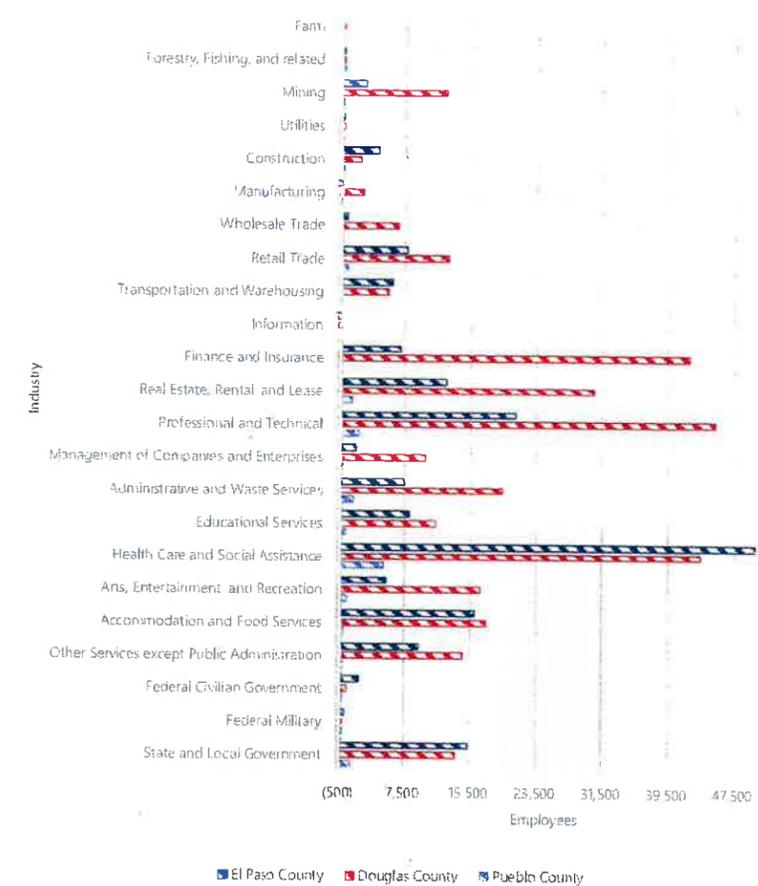
Source: Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

**Employment Change by Industry (2010-2019)**



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

**Project Employment Change by Industry (2019-2050)**



Source: U.S. Census, Woods & Poole, Houseal Lavigne Associates

## Past Planning Efforts

El Paso County's prior planning initiatives set the context for the development of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. Rather than incorporating local policies into a broader unified framework, previous long-range county-wide planning efforts have been viewed as a complement to local plans. This has added to the complexity and debate regarding important planning interpretations, rather than fulfilling their planning purpose to alleviate conflict, clarify, and aid in decision-making. The goal of the *Your El Paso Master Plan* process is therefore to provide a clear, easy-to-read and illustrative document that clearly communicates community goals and identifies specific actions to reach local objectives.

## County-Wide Planning

County-wide plans have evolved on an as-needed basis for much of El Paso's planning area, including the adoption of Small Area Plans to address local planning issues. However, in order to enact development regulations, such as zoning and land use standards, the County must have an adopted Master Plan in place. The value of a Master Plan cannot be understated, and the benefit to the community multiplies when the document is updated and used to guide the policies, regulations, projects, and inevitable proposed changes that impact the County, its residents, and the natural environment.

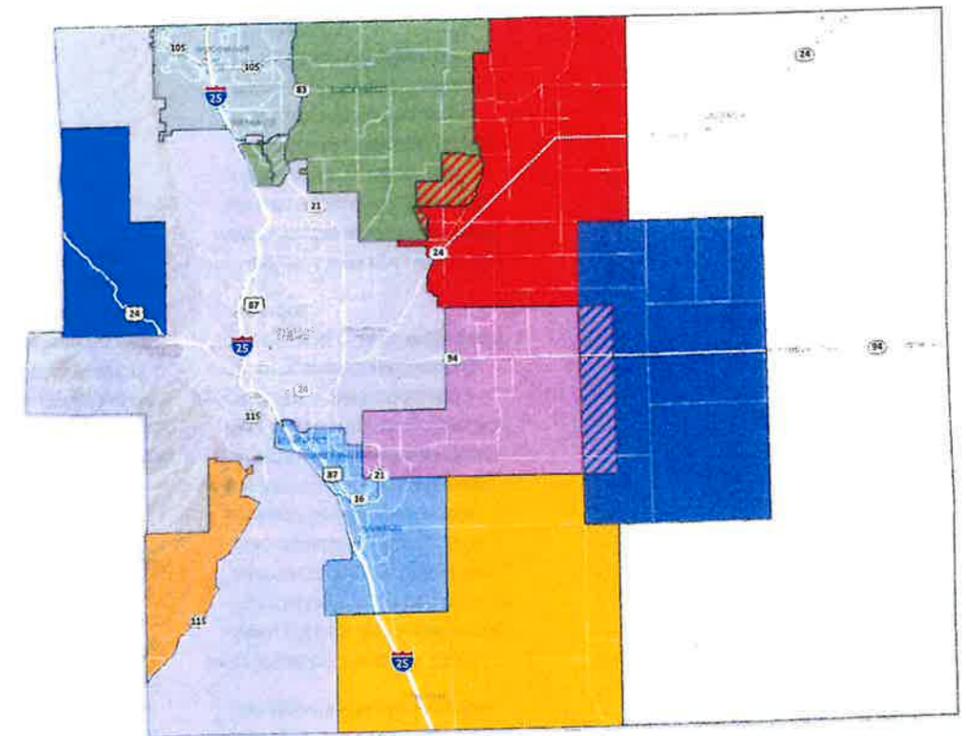
## El Paso County Policy Plan (1998)

The current Master Plan document for El Paso County was adopted in 1998. The County Policy Plan established broad goals and policies intended to serve as a framework for decision-making regarding the development of the County. Prior to the adoption of the Policy Plan, the previous plan used was the Pikes Peak Regional Land Use Plan which was adopted in 1970. One of the core functions of the Policy Plan, when devised, was to provide a regional planning perspective, due to the prior adoption of several Small Area Plans (SAPs). The plan was meant to add balance to these local plans, which do not address regional issues.

The Policy Plan also included goals and policies for natural systems; water resources; historic resources; economic development; growth and land use; special and unique land uses; parks, trails, and open space; transportation; water and wastewater; drainage and flood control; other utilities and services; housing; public financing districts; and land and development regulations.

## Small Area Plans

Since the mid-seventies, a primary focus of El Paso County's comprehensive planning efforts has been on the development and updating of SAPs for identified sub-areas of the unincorporated County. A primary intention of *Your El Paso Master Plan* will be to update and incorporate relevant content from local planning documents or SAPs. The future direction for localized planning efforts is under review throughout the planning process, with attention paid to the efficacy, efficiency, and equity of planning across the County. Many of the plans include sections or content that is replicated or voices similar goals or policies. The Master Plan Advisory Committee has been engaged in detail, reviewing the content of these plans which were adopted, or updated, between 1982 to 2008.



### Small Area Plans

- Black Forest
- Fountain Valley
- Tri-Lakes
- Eastern County
- Highway 94
- Ute Pass
- Ellicott Valley
- South Central
- Southwestern
- Falcon/Peyton

*Ute Pass Comprehensive Plan (1982)*

- Provides the policies for decision-making concerning land use, housing, and the provision of public facilities and services in the mountainous Ute Pass, and design guidelines to convert planning concepts into practical design solutions.
- Includes goals and objectives for land use; economy; public facilities and services; government; education; transportation; water and sewer; visual quality; and natural resources, recreation, and open space.

*Black Forest Preservation Plan Update (1987)*

- Originally completed in 1974 and updated in 1987, retaining the overall goal of maintaining the unique natural and residential character of the Black Forest Planning Area.
- Presents a framework for land use decision-making to respond to land development opportunities and constraints in the planning area, including goals, policies, and proposed actions.
- Includes topical sections on natural systems; parks, trails, and visual resources; facilities and services; drainage and flood control; transportation; water and wastewater; growth and land use; economic development; historic resources; and clustering and open space.
- Trails Addendum (1999) establishes guidelines for the development and coordination of a network of neighborhood and community trails.

*South Central Comprehensive Plan (1988)*

- Provides a framework for the guidance of potential growth and development within the South Central Planning Area, where pressures included growth in and around the edges of Colorado Springs and the City of Fountain, and examines existing conditions in 1988.
- Establishes goals and policies for natural systems; growth and land use; land use compatibility; visual quality; transportation; special facilities and utilities; community services; and government.

*Ellicott Valley Comprehensive Plan (1989)*

- Sets forth a set of criteria to evaluate the potential “performance” of a proposed land use in the Ellicott Valley Planning Area, and goals and policies which were developed for this purpose.
- Organizes policies under the following general subject headings: growth and land use; economic development; public facilities and community services; transportation, natural environment, water resources, visual and historical features, and government.

*Southwestern Area/Highway 115 Comprehensive Plan (1990)*

- Serves as a policy document to guide future land use decisions in the Southwestern/Highway 115 Planning Area, and identifies existing critical issues and severe environmental constraints facing development in many parts of the area.
- Provides goals, policies, and proposed actions for the following critical issues: transportation; conservation; resource extraction; public facilities; and land use.

*Tri-Lakes Comprehensive Plan (1999)*

- Provides guidance, direction, and expectations for land use planning issues, including growth management, compatibility, land use equity, property rights, and service standards, and the framework for development within sub-areas within the Tri-Lakes planning area.
- Evaluates topical sections, including natural systems; parks, trails, and visual resources; facilities and services; drainage and flood control; transportation; water and wastewater; growth and land use; economic development; historic resources; and clustering and open space.

*Highway 94 Comprehensive Plan (2003)*

- Guides long-range planning and community development in the Highway 94 planning area.
- Emphasizes the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation strategies to accomplish the intent and the purpose of the Plan, evaluating growth; land use and development; transportation; public facilities and services; water and wastewater; law enforcement; fire protection; education; parks, trails, and open space; visual character; history and culture; and natural resources.
- Includes a Concept Map to illustrate the planned location and general amount of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, park, and open space lands, and a radio frequency coordination area to support the operational integrity of Schriever AFB.

- *Falcon/Peyton Small Area Master Plan [2008]*
- Sets forth a framework within which proposed new land uses may be analyzed in the Falcon/Peyton planning area.
- Evaluates the following planning factors: general character; demographics; economic development; housing; natural systems; land use; transportation; community facilities and services.
- Outlines the goals and principles for formation of plan recommendations, and recommended land use pattern and policies.

### **Other Local Comprehensive Plans**

An important consideration of *Your El Paso Master Plan* is an all-inclusive appraisal of the County's planning context, including the plans for incorporated areas that are not under the authority of El Paso County land use planning jurisdiction. Careful evaluation of the edges of neighboring land use planning areas can help ensure that decision-makers in El Paso County respond to development with "big picture" plans. The following municipal plans include pertinent future land use maps, or a land use typologies map in Colorado Springs' new PlanCOS, that identify development constraints and opportunities, and a vision for future development in their surrounding areas.

Interrelation of El Paso County plans and policies includes relationships and boundary-edge considerations from content in the following municipal plans:

- City of Fountain Comprehensive Development Plan (2017)
- Town of Monument Plan Monument (2017)
- City of Manitou Springs Plan Manitou (2017)
- Town of Green Mountain Falls PlanGMF (2019)
- City of Colorado Springs Plan-COS (2019)

## CHAPTER 2

# EXISTING DEVELOPMENT SETTING

As part of the process to shape *Your El Paso Master Plan*, it is important to have a complete understanding of existing conditions. This context provides the starting point for the planning process. This chapter, and the six chapters that follow, provide in-depth evaluations of the present-day setting in El Paso County.

El Paso County is currently experiencing rapid residential growth pressures, demands for improved public infrastructure and services, evolving interactions with military installations and their needs, and calls to preserve rural and agricultural lands, among many other important development considerations. Dialogue with County residents, stakeholders, and elected officials underscores that development, or changes to land, buildings, or neighborhoods, in El Paso County is a major subject of interest.

### Development in El Paso County

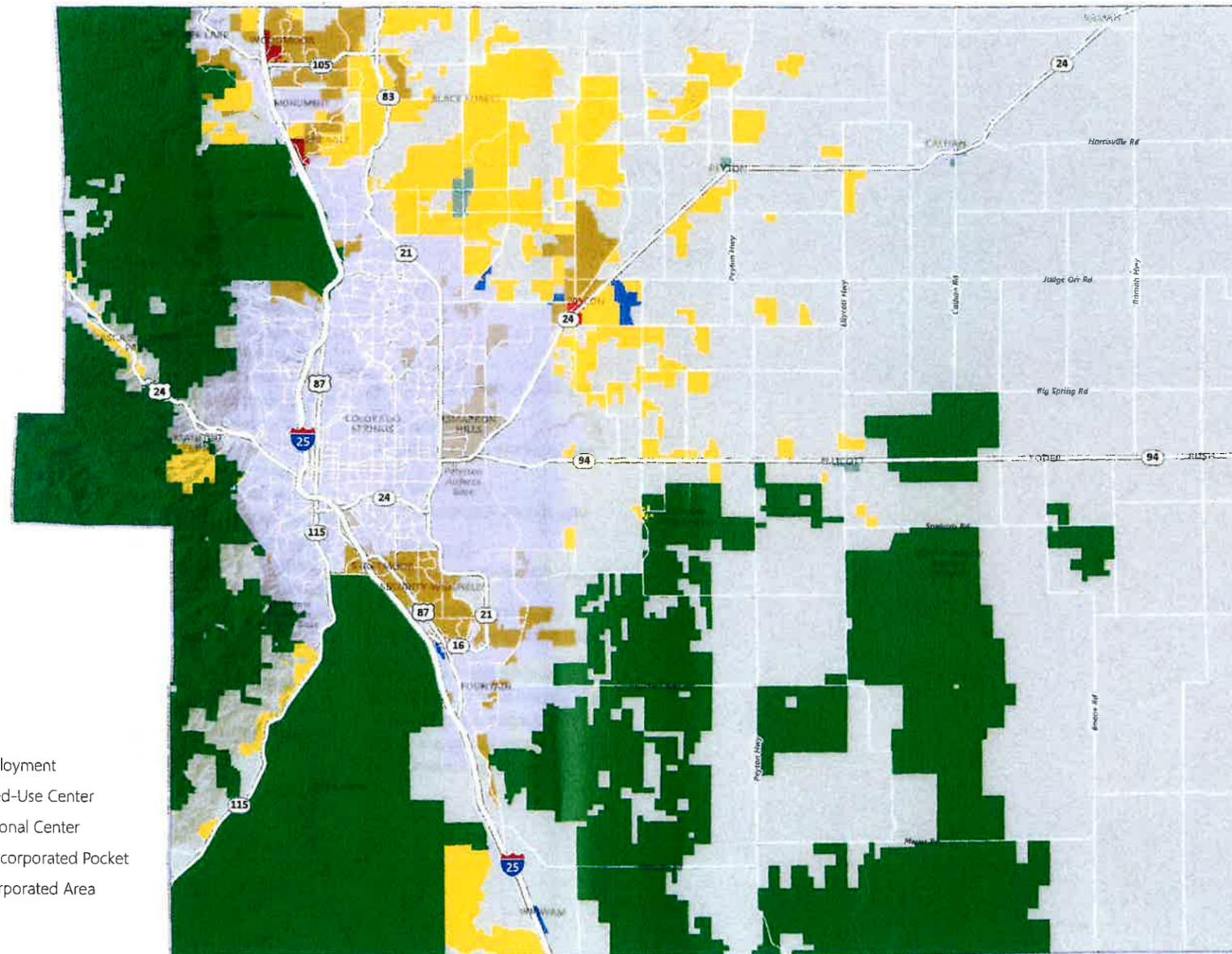
This section provides an inventory of the existing patterns of development in unincorporated El Paso County. It is of course a challenge to evaluate all the development that has occurred within such a big place – El Paso County covers an area almost as large as the State of Delaware. This task is made simpler by considering both the existing character and geography of all parts of the County.

### Existing Development Types

The accompanying map shows El Paso County and the 10 existing development types that make up various communities, neighborhoods, and places. These areas are described with reference to their context, land use, and character.

#### Existing Development Types

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Rural                    |  Employment            |
|  Rural Center             |  Mixed-Use Center      |
|  Managed Lands            |  Regional Center       |
|  Large-Lots or Ranchettes |  Unincorporated Pocket |
|  Suburban Development     |  Incorporated Area     |



### Rural

The Rural landscape in El Paso County covers most of the eastern half of the County and just over fifty percent of the whole County, as mapped out. The character of these areas is rural, remote, or distant from high activity areas or dense suburban or urban places. Rural El Paso County exists in the mountainous or hilly areas to the west, southwest, and south, surrounded by forested federal land or state-owned parks or preserves, and in the rolling plains to the east, with irrigated crop lands, or grazing lands used for agricultural production. Rural parts of El Paso also provide for farm homesteads and large single-family estates with the parcels for residential development tending to be very substantial in size. On average, residential parcels in Rural areas average around 34 acres per parcel.

### Rural Center

Rural Centers are at the heart of communities that exist in outlying areas of the County. These "village" centers are spread throughout the north and east parts of the County, and include places like Black Forest (along Black Forest Road), Peyton, Ellicott, Yoder, and Rush. A Rural Center contains a mix of residential and limited commercial development along main streets, and include opportunities for access to convenience stores, coffee shops, or restaurants. Rural Centers are surrounded by Rural areas or Large-Lot or Ranchette Development.

### Managed Lands

Managed Lands are federal, state or local government-owned properties that cover large areas of El Paso County. These areas as shown do not represent all government holdings in the County, however they include the most prominent, expansive areas, including military installations, like Fort Carson and the US Air Force Academy, other large rural tracts, park lands, and conservation areas.

### Large Lots or Ranchettes

Large Lot or Ranchette Development, sometimes called Rural Suburban Development, covers almost three times the land area in El Paso County in comparison to the smaller-lot Suburban Development. They are typically located in-between suburban and rural areas and vary in character based on geography and landscape. While these areas are more heavily residential in nature than rural areas, the size and spread of housing development can provide a sense of rural character. These areas have a median lot size of 5.0 acres. Many large-lot development areas rely on wells for water and septic systems for wastewater.

There are four areas of distinctive large-lot or ranchette developments in El Paso County, as shown and ordered clockwise around the central region, starting in the north:

- **Tri-Lakes** areas are near Monument and Palmer Lake, and along the County's northern border, with an average lot size of 6.0 acres.
- **Black Forest** areas consist of a unique terrain of hills, pine forest, and creek beds, with an average lot size of 5.8 acres.
- **Eastern Plains** areas are near Highway 94, Falcon, Peyton, and Ellicott, with an average lot size of 5.6 acres.
- **Mountain Corridor** areas are in the south and west parts of the County, with existing development along the Front Range or within mountain passes. Areas in the south, near Wigwam, have average lot sizes of 6.7 while areas in the southwest along Highway 115 have average lot sizes of 5.1 acres. Residential lots in the west, along the narrow Ute Pass, have smaller rural lots with an average lot size of 1.1 acres.



### Large-Lots or Ranchettes

- Tri-Lakes
- Black Forest
- Eastern Plains
- Mountain Corridors



**Suburban Development**

Suburban Development covers more than 28,000 acres (45 square miles) of land in El Paso County. These areas are located close to Colorado Springs, Monument, Palmer Lake, or Fountain, and include development in County places like Falcon, Gleneagle, Woodmoor, Security-Widefield, and Stratmoor. The character of Suburban Development is predominantly residential, and some County suburban areas may be difficult to distinguish from suburban development within city limits.

Suburban Development is most often in the form of subdivisions with small lot sizes, curvilinear neighborhood streets, and supporting neighborhood facilities like schools or places of worship, and housing types may vary from detached homes, to attached homes, or multi-unit development. The average lot size of Suburban Development in El Paso County is 0.7 acres per lot, and the median lot size is 0.2 acres (or just 8,700 square feet). Utilities, such as water and wastewater services are shared, dependent on the subdivision or place.

**Employment**

Employment areas comprise land for industrial or other business users. They are located near I-25 or other highway or business road corridors. Industrial activity can potentially cause adverse impacts on neighboring residential development or the environment, or be disruptive to rural areas, and in the County these areas were typically in existence prior to the residential areas growing up around them. An example of an Employment Area in El Paso County is the Meadow Lake Airport, a private airport west of Falcon, and its adjoining land.

**Mixed-Use Center**

Mixed-Use Centers in El Paso County are focused along main points of access to I-25 in the north. These include centers at Gleneagle (Exit 156) and Woodmoor (Exit 161). The mix of uses contained in these high-activity areas include commercial services, restaurants, banks, gas stations, park-and-ride, apartments and townhomes, and institutional uses, like a high school and library. The development in these centers caters to the surrounding homes, and also to travelers along the Interstate. Mixed-Use Centers in El Paso County are surrounded by residential development or incorporated areas.

**Regional Center**

A Regional Center in El Paso County is located in the heart of Falcon and features a unique mix of uses for the County. Falcon's Regional Center is a major commercial destination for residents in the Falcon-Peyton region, and communities farther to the east. The area differs from other communities' Mixed-Use or Rural Centers by providing a level of goods and services that attracts people from across the rural region. The Regional Center at Falcon provides access to large grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, restaurants, and entertainment, as well as institutional services like a post office, schools, and a library. The center is accessible from major transportation routes, including Highway 24 and Woodmen Road.

**Unincorporated Pockets**

Within the County's Incorporated Areas, there are "pockets" of development that remain unincorporated, although they are surrounded on all sides by the City of Colorado Springs. These Unincorporated Pockets include the area of Cimarron Hills, and other residential areas, or mixed-use areas with residential, commercial, institutional, or industrial occupants. The character of these areas may give the sense that it is part of the City, because of their dense urban development and high intensity land uses.

**Incorporated Area**

Incorporated Areas are the lands within the boundaries of the eight incorporated cities and towns in El Paso County, the largest of which is the City of Colorado Springs, and the smallest of which is the Town of Ramah in the northeast of the County.

## Zoning and Development Controls

This section provides a brief summary of the existing regulation in place in El Paso County that govern new and existing development. The Land Development Code for El Paso County applies to the development of buildings, structures, and uses of land throughout unincorporated areas. The boundaries of zoning districts are illustrated on the County's Zoning Map.

The Master Plan provides guidance for zoning and subdivision matters; however, it is not a binding document. This means that the Board of County Commissioners retains discretion in how to apply the Master Plan in making land use decisions. It is the role of the El Paso County Planning Commission to maintain and update *Your El Paso Master Plan*.

### El Paso County Land Development Code

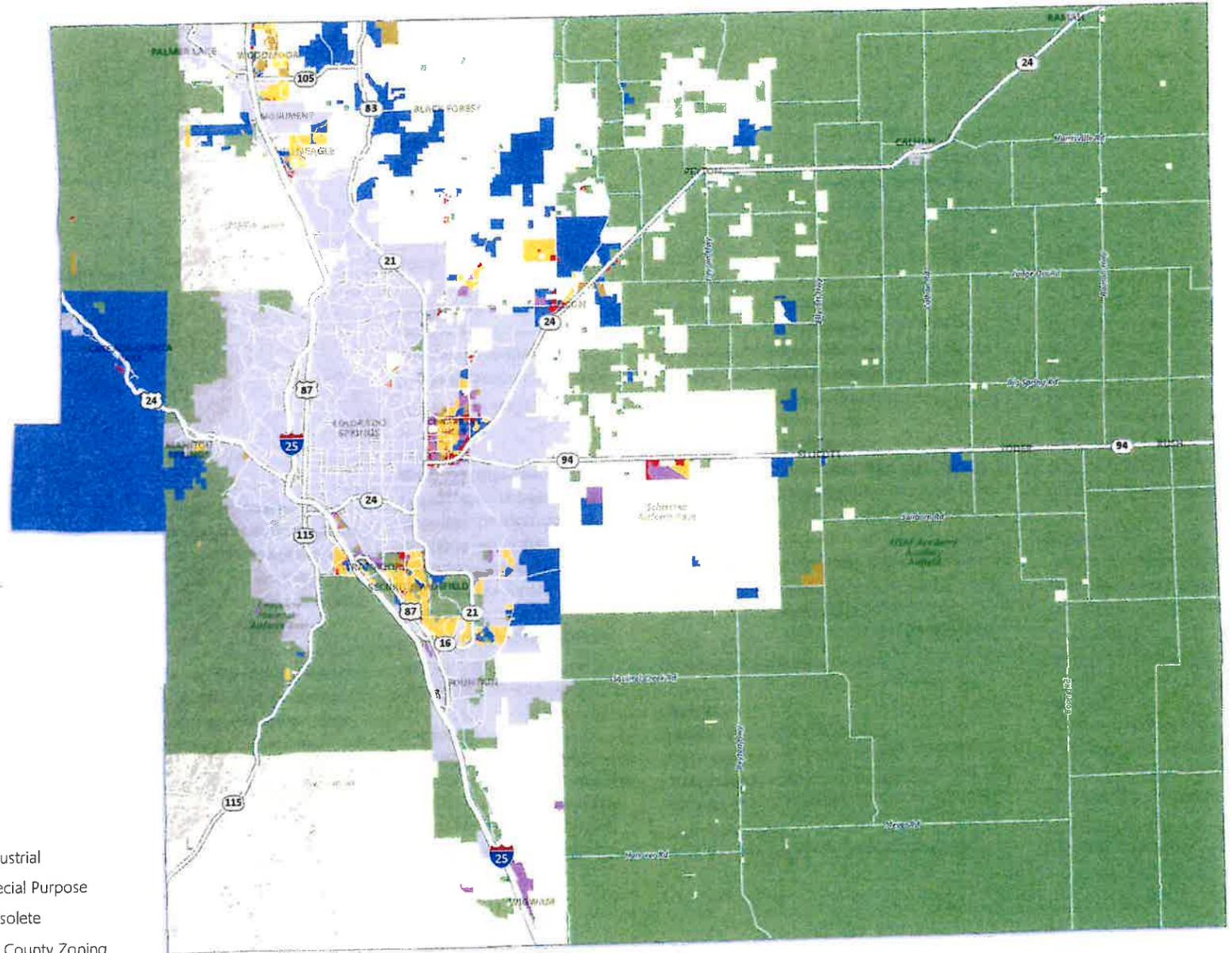
El Paso County's Land Development Code was adopted in October 12, 2006 and continues to be amended from time to time. The code includes administrative and enforcement provisions, establishment of zoning districts, land use and dimensional standards for each zone, development standards, such as for parking, lighting, and environmental standards, and subdivision design and improvement requirements.

### Existing Zoning Districts

The following general zoning districts are the base zoning for the application and administrations of land use and development regulations in El Paso County. The following zones are generalized on the accompanying map.

### Current Zoning

 Agriculture and Forestry	 Industrial
 Residential Rural	 Special Purpose
 Residential Suburban	 Obsolete
 Residential Multi-Dwelling	 No County Zoning
 Commercial	



## **Agricultural and Forestry Districts**

### *Forestry and Recreation District (F-5)*

The F-5 zoning district is a 5 acre district intended to accommodate the conservation of forest resources, protect the natural environment and preserve open space, while accommodating limited residential use.

### *Agricultural District (A-35)*

The A-35 zoning district is a 35 acre district primarily intended to accommodate rural communities and lifestyles, including the conservation of farming, ranching and agricultural resources.

### *Agricultural District (A-5)*

The A-5 zoning district is a 5 acre district primarily intended to conserve agricultural resources and ranching operations and accommodate limited residential use.

## **Residential Rural Districts**

### *Residential Rural District (RR-5)*

The RR-5 zoning district is a 5 acre district intended to accommodate low-density, rural, single-family residential development.

### *Residential Rural District (RR-2.5)*

The RR-2.5 zoning district is a 2.5 acre district intended to accommodate low-density, rural, single family residential development.

### *Residential Rural District (RR-0.5)*

The RR-0.5 zoning district is a .5 acre district intended to accommodate rural residential uses where urban services are generally available.

## **Residential Suburban District**

### *Residential Suburban District (RS-20000)*

The RS-20000 zoning district is a 20,000 square foot district intended to accommodate larger lot, single-family residential development with available urban services.

### *Residential Suburban District (RS-6000)*

The RS-6000 zoning district is a 6,000 square foot district intended to accommodate single-family residential development.

### *Residential Suburban District (RS-5000)*

The RS-5000 zoning district is a 5,000 square foot district intended to accommodate single-family and two-family residential development.

## **Residential Multi-Dwelling Districts**

### *Residential Multi-Dwelling District (RM-12)*

The RM-12 zoning district is a 12 dwelling unit per acre district intended to accommodate moderate density single-family attached and low-density multi-dwelling development.

### *Residential Multi-Dwelling District (RM-30)*

The RM-30 zoning district is a 30 dwelling unit per acre district primarily intended to accommodate moderate-density multi-dwelling development.

## **Commercial Districts**

### *Commercial Community District (CC)*

The CC zoning district is intended to accommodate retail sales and service establishments that generally require freestanding or small center type buildings and that primarily serve adjoining neighborhoods.

### *Commercial Regional District (CR)*

The CR zoning district is intended to accommodate regional centers providing ease of pedestrian and vehicular circulation, unity of architectural design, and best serving the convenience of the public and aesthetic enhancement of the community and region.

### *Commercial Services District (CS)*

The CS zoning district is intended to accommodate retail, wholesale or service commercial uses that serve the general public.

## **Industrial Districts**

### *Limited Industrial District (I-2)*

The I-2 zoning district is intended to accommodate light industrial and manufacturing activities, which are generally clean, quiet and free from objectionable or dangerous nuisance or hazard.

### *Heavy Industrial District (I-3)*

The I-3 zoning district is intended to accommodate manufacturing and industrial uses, which may include related outside storage of raw or finished materials.

## **Special Purpose Districts**

Special purpose zoning districts are established to accommodate unique uses or development types or to address special development conditions:

### *Planned Unit Development District (PUD)*

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) district is a versatile zoning mechanism to encourage innovative and creative design and to facilitate a mix of uses including residential, business, commercial, and industrial, recreation, open space, and other selected secondary uses.

### *Mobile Home Park District (MHP)*

The MHP district is intended to promote an acceptable living environment for occupants of mobile home parks.

### *Mobile/Manufactured Home Subdivision District (MHS)*

The MHS district is intended to accommodate mobile/manufactured home subdivisions where individual lots are established and may be conveyed.

### *Recreational Vehicle Park District (RVP)*

The RVP district is intended to accommodate recreational vehicle parks, which are sites used for the location of occupied recreational vehicles.

### *Residential-Topographic District (R-T)*

The R-T district is intended to accommodate residential use in regions of extreme topographical conditions.

## **Obsolete Zoning Districts**

The C-1, C-2, M, and R-4 zoning districts have been declared to be obsolete. No land in El Paso County will be rezoned to an obsolete zoning district. However, landowners are encouraged to rezone land from an obsolete zoning district classification and may be eligible for incentives to do so.

## Market Assessment

The context of a countywide market assessment is much different than that of a municipality, particularly as it relates to nonresidential uses. The majority of the uses and the built environment, as well as a large percentage of demand, are contained within the existing boundaries of cities, towns, and census designated places. The market assessment outlined in this report, provides data on El Paso County as a whole, both incorporated and unincorporated areas. Market areas and development potential will be dependent on use and location. Supply and demand within individual market sectors helps determine the potential for those markets to emerge or expand in a community. This section of the report presents an analysis of office, industrial, and retail sectors, their existing capacities, and future economic forecasts for each sector. Data for this section is from CoStar, a provider of real estate analytics, for the second quarter (Q2) as it was the most recent data available at the time of the analysis.

## Glossary

### Net Absorption

Net absorption is the total occupied square feet (move-ins) minus the total space vacated (move-outs) over a specified time period for existing buildings only. Lease renewals are not included in net absorption calculations; however, when a lease renewal includes additional space, the additional space is counted. Preleasing of nonexistent or partially constructed buildings (planned under construction or under renovation) is not included in the calculation until the actual move-in occurs.

### Rentable Building Area

Rentable building area is the total square footage of rented usable area. This includes the space a tenant will occupy, plus the related common areas of the building such as lobbies, hallways, bathrooms, operations rooms, etc.

### Vacancy Rate

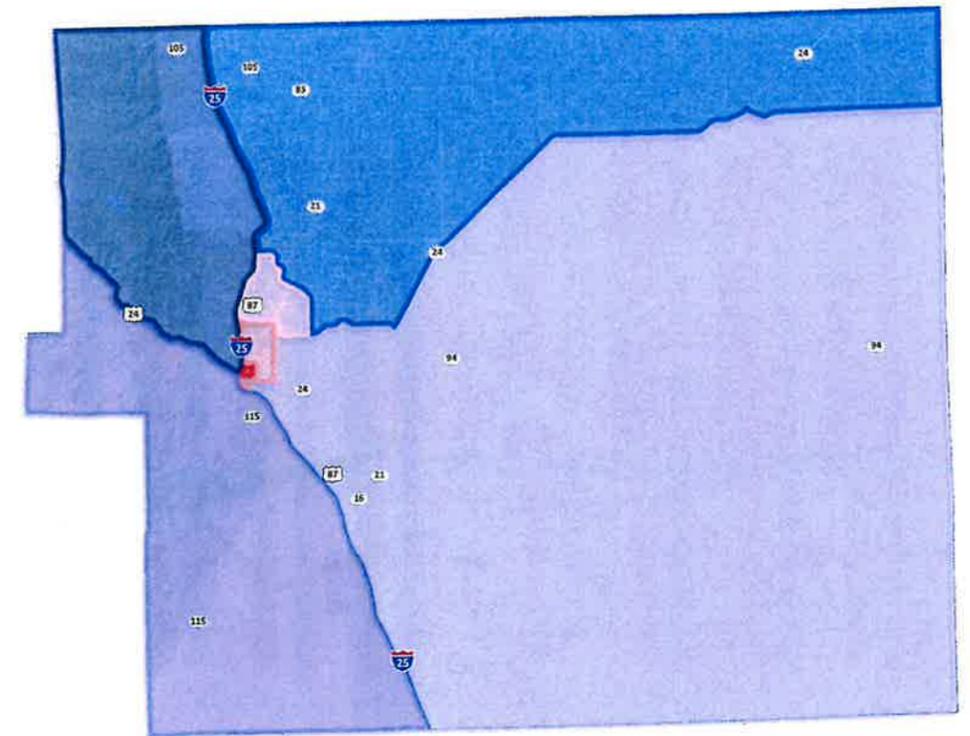
Vacancy rate is the amount of vacant spaces (whether new or existing) divided by the existing rentable building area. This rate is shown as a percentage.

## Graphs

The graphs in this section show two sets of data on the y-axis over the same time period. The bars on the primary axis represent average rent prices, which is expressed along right y-axis. The other is a line graph that represents vacancy rates, which is shown along the left y-axis.

## Study Area

El Paso County was analyzed in comparison to two other counties, Douglas County and Pueblo County, as well as the State of Colorado. In some cases the County was divided into submarkets for additional detail. They are defined in the Submarkets Map.



## Submarkets

- Central Business District
- Greater Central Business District
- North
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southeast
- Southwest

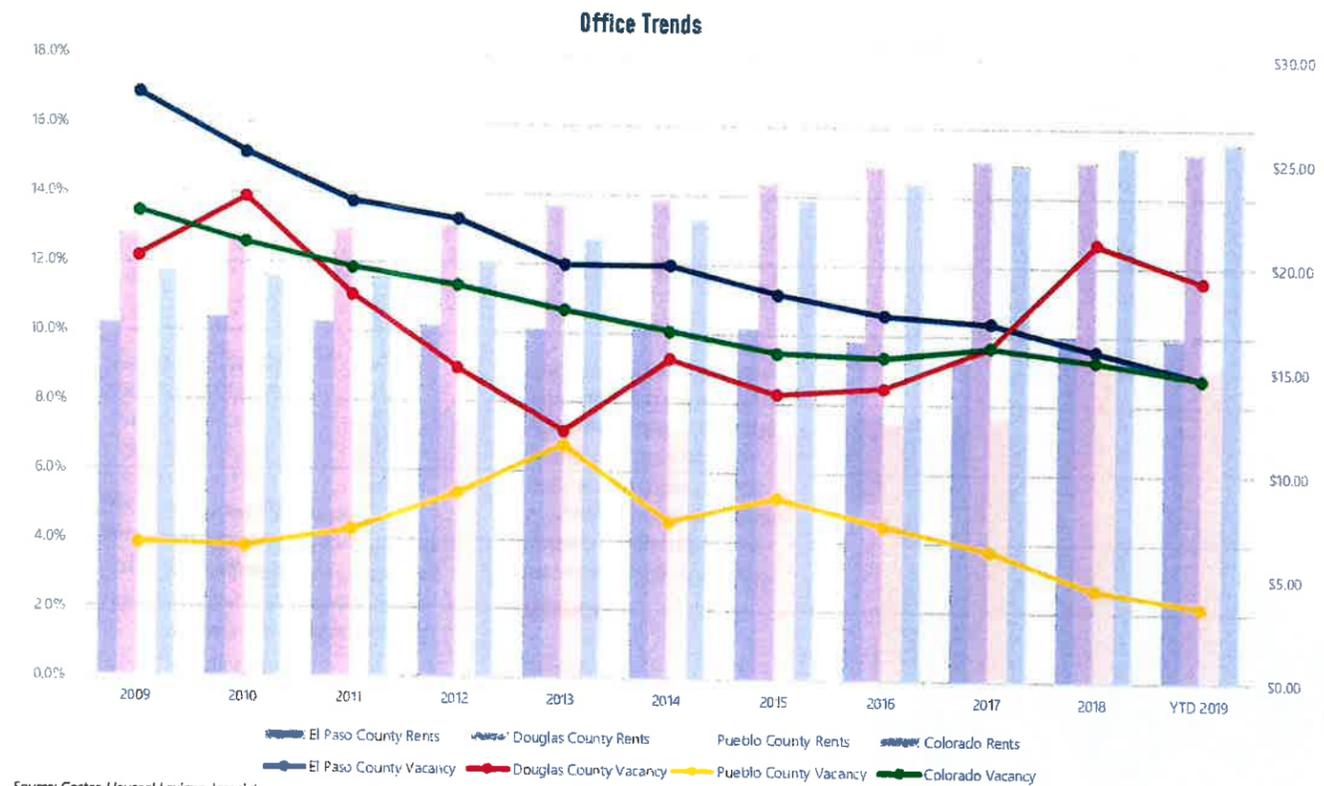
**Office**

In the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, El Paso County had a vacancy rate of 8.8 percent, consistent with the vacancy rate across the entire state. El Paso County's vacancy rate has reached a low not experienced since before the 2008 recession. This is largely due to greater leasing activity from smaller tenants in existing buildings, particularly in the Northeast submarket. This submarket includes Black Forest, Gleneagle, Briargate, and parts of Falcon, Peyton, and Calhan. The stronger leasing from smaller tenants in existing space is likely related to the growth and subsequent expansion of existing businesses in the County. There is, however, a large office development (109,000 square feet) under construction in the Northeast submarket just south of Interquest Parkway with an expected completion date of December 2019.

Douglas County has a higher vacancy rate at 11.6 percent, but Pueblo County's rate is four times lower than El Paso's at 2.2 percent. It should be noted, however, that Pueblo County contains only about one-eighth the inventory of El Paso County. Pueblo's lower vacancy rate can also be attributed to minimal development.

Office rents in El Paso County have fluctuated slightly over the past decade, reaching their lowest point in 2017 at \$15.49 per square foot. Since then, however, rents have grown by seven percent. Douglas County has higher rental rates than El Paso County largely due to higher rents and greater demand in the Denver market. Forces behind high demand in the market can include property values and construction costs. As a smaller market, Pueblo County's rents are lower than El Paso's, however, they have grown by 18 percent since 2017.

While rents have fluctuated over the past decade, the County's office market has remained stable. This includes several recent and planned developments. Projected growth in employment in professional services will continue to create demand for quality office space over the next ten to twenty years.



Source: Costar, Houseal Lavigne Associates

## Industrial

El Paso County has a vacancy rate of 4.9 percent for the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, which is slightly higher than the State's rate (4.5 percent). Like the office market, the County's industrial vacancy rate is at its lowest since before the 2008 recession. This is due to a number of recent large-scale leases across the County including a 200,000-square-foot building in Fountain Business Park and a 144,000 square foot building in Colorado Springs. Each of these leases is in a different submarket noting opportunity and demand is not concentrated in one area. There is a large industrial development (100,000 square feet) under construction in the Northwest submarket on Buckingham Drive that is expected to be completed in 2020. This development is part of a potentially large-scale 800,000-square-foot flex industrial campus for T5 Data Centers. Additionally, there are several proposed industrial projects ranging from 10,000-110,000 square feet within the Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ) that could take advantage of adjacency to the Colorado Springs Airport (COS).

Companies like TF Data Centers already have existing buildings in the County are building additional, larger developments to expand their business in the County. Douglas County has a higher vacancy rate at 6.2 percent, but Pueblo County's rate is less than half of El Paso's at two percent. Similar to the office market, Pueblo County's industrial market is only a fraction (one-third) of El Paso County's in terms of square footage of total inventory. Minimal development combined with significantly smaller inventory and little turnover can be attributed to Pueblo's low vacancy rate.

Rents in El Paso County have been steadily climbing since 2012 with significant growth (38 percent) since 2016. The average rent for industrial space for the entire State is only three cents per square foot higher than in El Paso County, which indicates the County is average representation for the industrial market in the State.

Douglas County's rental rates are more than two dollars higher than El Paso County's and Colorado's, which again is due to its inclusion in the Denver metro market, which itself is experiencing robust demand caused, in part, by growth in the marijuana industry. While marijuana production and distribution is legal across the State, many counties like El Paso have more stringent regulations on when and where both can occur, particularly in terms of unincorporated areas. While as a smaller market, Pueblo County's rents are lower than El Paso's.

Steady rent growth in the El Paso County industrial market combined with sharply declining vacancy rates since 2017 indicate strengthening of the market. Recent and planned large-scale industrial and flex developments across the County also suggests desire for industrial space in El Paso County. These recent and longer-term changes coupled with planned developments indicate growing confidence in the market.

Industrial Trends



Source: Costar, Houseal Lavigne Associates

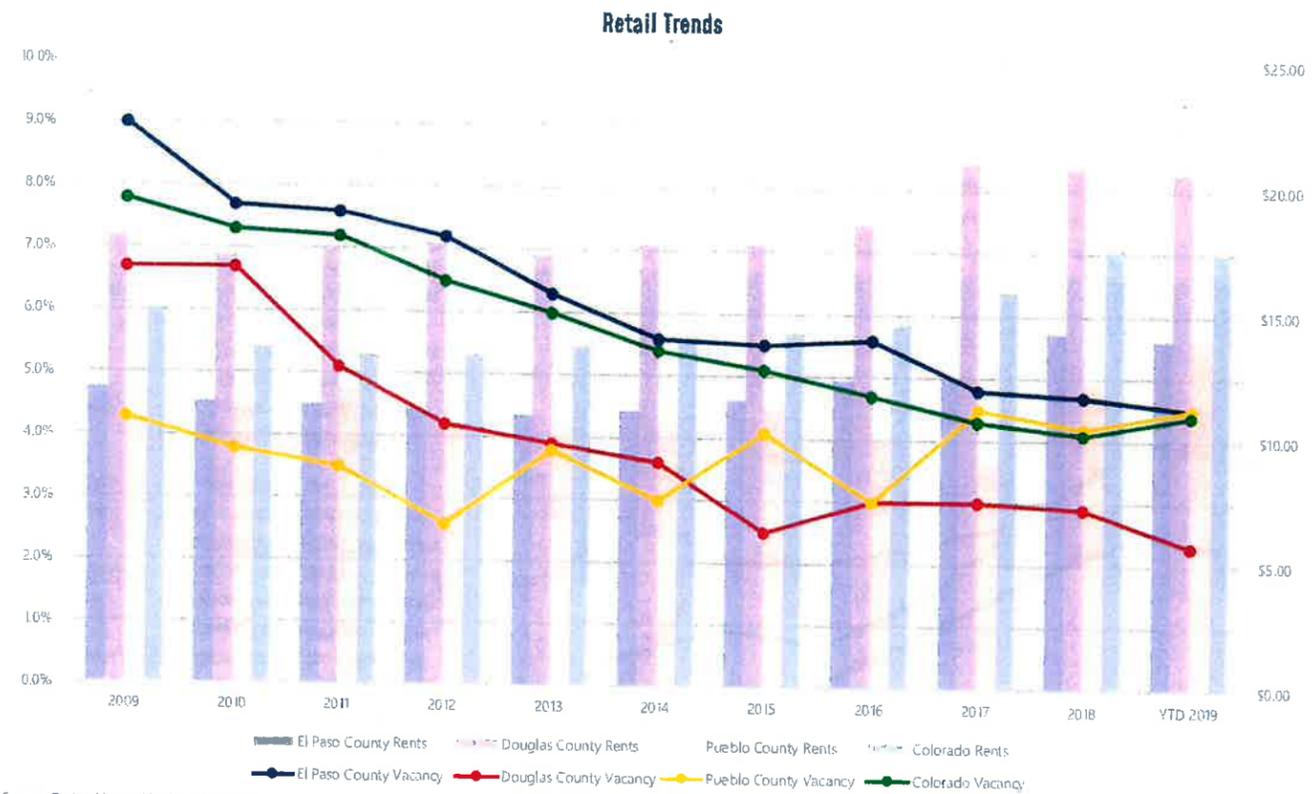
## Retail

El Paso County's retail vacancy rate is 4.5 percent for the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, which is slightly higher than the State's rate (4.4 percent). Again, like the office and industrial markets, this is a vacancy rate the County hasn't experienced in over a decade. Even with several significant retailers closing in the County including Whole Foods Market (27,700 square feet), Gordmans (80,000 sf), and Toys R Us (80,000 sf), leasing has grown in the County. Fifteen properties were built across the County in 2018 totaling over 113,000 square feet. Thus far in 2019, 18 properties have been built (151,000 sf) and another 20 new developments are proposed however most of them are concentrated in the northeast. Existing businesses are expanding into larger spaces as well such as King Soopers at Claremont Ranch Marketplace south of Constitution Avenue.

Douglas County has a significantly lower vacancy rate at 2.3 percent, and Pueblo County's rate is the same as El Paso's at 4.5 percent. Being a part of the Denver metro retail market, Douglas County has capitalized on the prevalent demand for retail in the region with commercial growth down the Interstate 25 corridor. However, it has done so without incurring the higher development costs of an urban area such as in the City of Denver.

Average retail rents in El Paso County have increased by 29 percent since 2013. Average rents for the State (\$17.50/sf) are \$3 per square foot higher than in El Paso County (\$14.02/sf). Douglas County's rents generally match the Colorado state average, due to the influence of the Denver metro market. Pueblo County's rents are only one dollar lower than El Paso's, which has seen over 50 percent growth since 2017.

Rent growth since 2013 and an overall declining vacancy rate since 2009 suggest continual interest in El Paso County's retail market. Recent vacancies of larger properties represent fluctuation in the County which correlate to change in the market. However, expansion of existing retail businesses and planned developments still indicate confidence in the overall market. Even with recent vacancy trends, retail continues to be a strong market in El Paso County.



## Existing Economic Development Resources

### Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone Program

The Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone Program (EZP) was established to improve the local business climate and facilitate economic growth in targeted areas of El Paso County. The EZP is an incentive which encourages new and established businesses to locate and expand in economically distressed areas. Businesses within the Enterprise Zone may be eligible to receive tax savings for any or all of the following:

- Making capital investments;
- Hiring new employees;
- Providing training for employees;
- Rehabilitating old buildings; and
- Conducting research and development.

### Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ)

The Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ) was established to attract local businesses and allow them to succeed at the Colorado Springs Airport. Businesses can benefit from numerous tax savings within the CAZ by resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners for the following eligible activities:

- Sale, purchase, lease, rental, use, storage, distribution, or consumption of any aircraft, aircraft parts or supplies, equipment, tooling, solvents and/or paints used or consumed in the manufacture, maintenance, repair or overhaul of aircraft within the CAZ.
- Purchase of lease equipment directly and exclusively used or consumed in the manufacture, maintenance, repair or overhaul of aircraft within the CAZ.
- Annually, El Paso County will provide a credit back to eligible businesses within the Airport CAZ for the County's 1% general sales tax collected on the items above; businesses not in the Airport CAZ will receive a 0.5% credit.
- Construction materials may also be eligible.

### Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones were enacted as part of the 2017 federal tax reform package and provide a tax incentive for individuals who invest in low-income urban and rural communities through favorable treatment of reinvested capital gains and forgiveness of tax on new capital gains. The economic benefits include:

- Promoting economic vitality in areas that experienced uneven recovery.
- Funding the development of workforce and affordable housing.
- Supporting new infrastructure to support population and economic growth.
- Investing in startup businesses that have potential for rapid increases in scale.
- Upgrading the capability of existing underutilized assets through capital improvement investments.

Cimarron Hills is an Opportunity Zone located in unincorporated El Paso County with access to major retail, entertainment and hospitality, and industrial development.

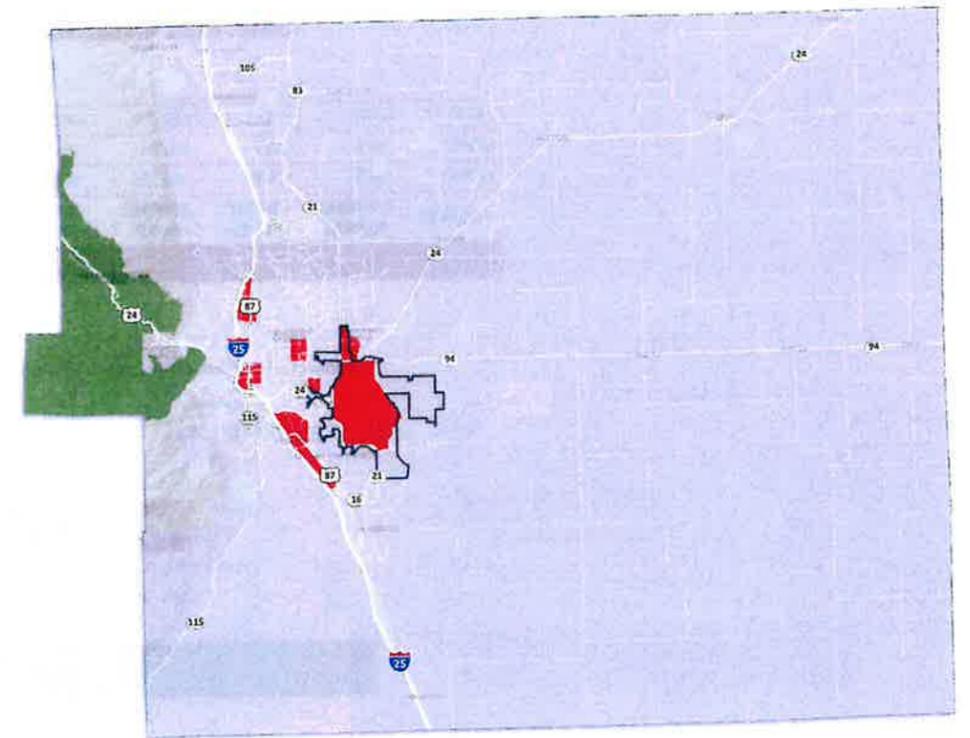
### Small Business Development Resources

The Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides many resources that businesses may inquire about including consulting, training, and networking as well as digital assistance including access to databases and frequently asked questions.

### Chambers of Commerce

Several Chambers of Commerce are located within El Paso County offering great networking, marketing, and consulting resources to businesses within the community including the following:

- Eastern Plains Chamber of Commerce;
- Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce;
- Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce;
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce; and
- Colorado Springs Chamber and EDC.



### Economic Development Zones

- Commercial Aeronautical Zone (CAZ)
- Opportunity Zones
- Pikes Peak Enterprise Zone

## Housing Conditions

This section summarizes analyses related to the El Paso County housing market. Data from the American Community Survey, El Paso County, Woods & Poole, and CoStar was used to conduct the analyses included in this report. Due to their complexity, the analyses performed in this section are solely for understanding housing needs in El Paso County. Any reference to Douglas or Pueblo County is merely for regional context. Thus, for some datasets in this section, comparisons are minimal as to be accurate, separate housing studies would need to be developed for both Douglas and/or Pueblo County.

### Income Comparison

The following analysis compares existing housing values in El Paso County with household incomes. The evaluation is conducted by occupancy tenure, looking at both owner and renter households.

For El Paso County, a total is provided that deducts the households in each income range from the total "attainable housing units" for that income range. Attainable housing units are defined as costing no more than 30 percent of annual income at the market rate.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development established the 30-percent standard as a means for examining affordable housing need across the country.

In the tables that follow, positive values indicate there are more attainable housing units for the corresponding income range than households (oversupply). Negative values indicate there are more households in the income range than corresponding affordable housing units (undersupply). The total discrepancy between households and attainable housing units determines the existence of surplus or demand.

- For owner households, the income comparison identifies a shortage of attainable housing units for existing households with incomes between \$10K-\$49,999K per year as well as those earning more than \$100,000 per year. For the highest-income households, lack of housing options is not a significant issue as they can easily afford a lower-value home where a surplus exists. However, high negative values in the \$100K+ income range may also signal a shortage of higher-end housing in the County.

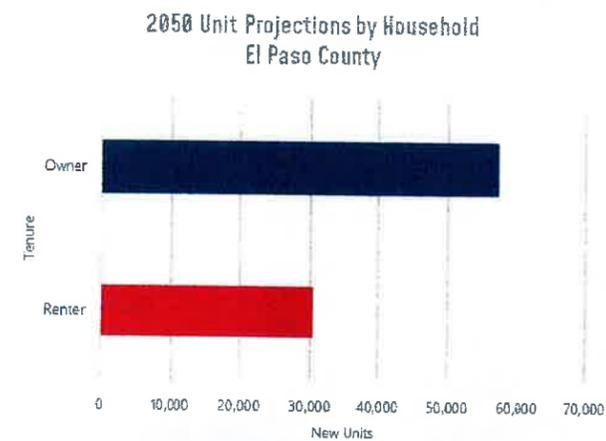
- For renters, the shortages are most apparent for lower-income households with incomes less than \$25,000 a year. This indicates a lack of attainable, market-rate housing units for them to rent in their price range. Thus, many County residents may be experiencing a housing cost burden (i.e., spending 30 percent or more of annual income on housing).

**Note:** In the owner and renter affordability tables, positive values indicate there are more attainable housing units for the corresponding income range than households (oversupply). Negative values indicate there are more households in the income range than corresponding affordable housing units (undersupply). The total discrepancy between households and attainable housing units determines the existence of surplus or demand.

## Household Projections and Needs Assessment

The needs assessment analysis calculates the number of additional units needed based on existing tenure ratios (the number of owner households vs. renter), with consideration of existing vacancy rates. Assuming that the ratio of owners to renters is stable within the County, the needs assessment determines the total new owner and renter households for 2050 based on the projected increase of 93,489 new households.

- Existing vacant units can only accommodate approximately 5,900 (six percent) of the projected new households, two-thirds of which are rental housing. Based on this assessment, it is projected that the County will still need to construct 87,621 new housing units through 2050. This will require significant development/redevelopment of available land and careful planning in the County.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Houseal Lavigne Associates

### Owner Affordability Income Ranges

Community	<\$5K	\$5K-9,999	\$10K-14,999	\$15K-19,999	\$20K-24,999	\$25K-34,999	\$35K-49,999	\$50K-74,999	\$75K-99,999	\$100K-149,999	\$150K+
El Paso County	1,259	49	-2,650	-2,883	-3,478	-4,828	-3,907	15,294	9,631	-1,992	-6,497
Douglas County	-95	-234	-630	-702	-1,157	-2,602	-3,463	-4,981	1,010	9,417	3,438
Pueblo County	133	-252	-902	-486	492	1,624	2,060	2,169	-537	-2,806	-1,497

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Houseal Lavigne Associates

### Renter Affordability Income Ranges

Community	<\$5K	\$5K-9,999	\$10K-14,999	\$15K-19,999	\$20K-24,999	\$25K-34,999	\$35K-49,999	\$50K-74,999	\$75K+
El Paso County	-3,304	-3,503	-4,744	-3,491	-1,318	7,188	12,053	5,038	-10,126
Douglas County	-428	-210	-537	-590	-585	-1,151	1,657	5,249	-4,148
Pueblo County	-1,473	-1,491	-1,633	-927	846	4,018	2,449	-746	-2,049

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Houseal Lavigne Associates

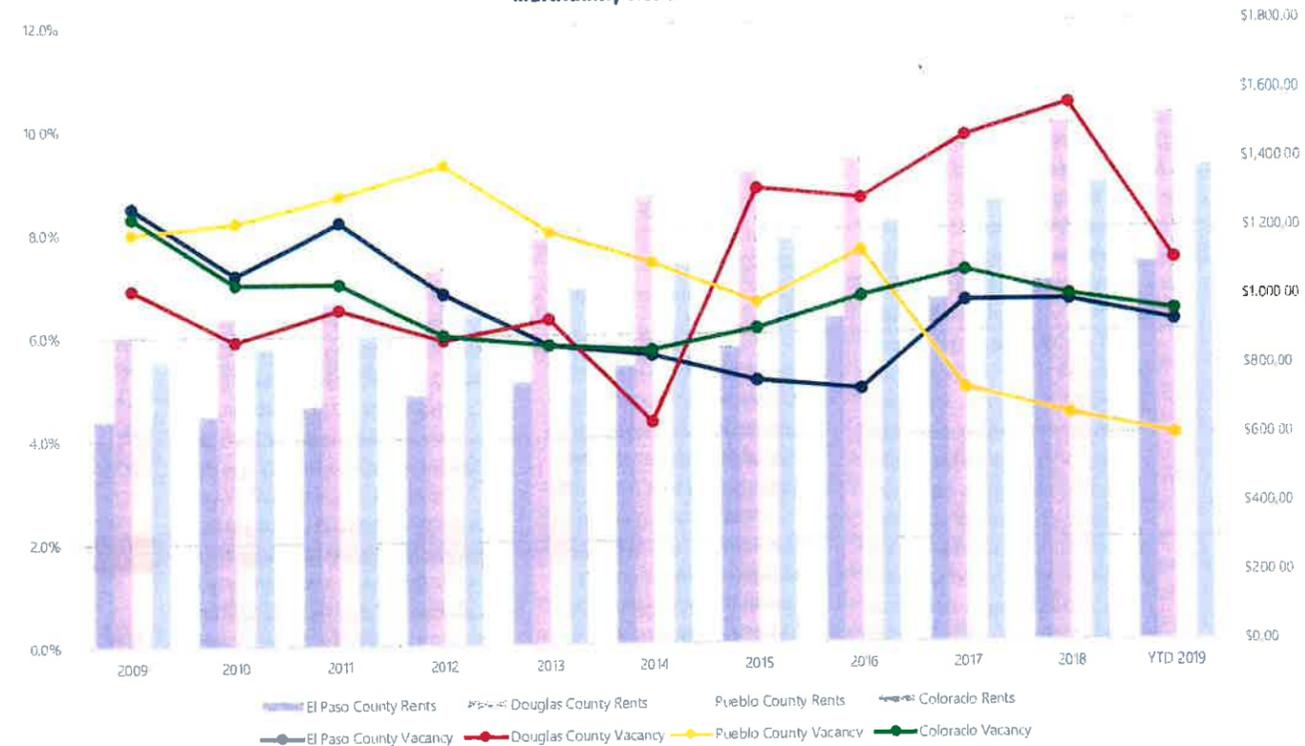
### Multifamily

Multifamily vacancy in El Paso County is 6.2 percent for the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, which is slightly lower than the Colorado's rate (6.4 percent). This is a slight decline from 2017 and 2018 but still an increase from 2013-2016 rates. Fifteen new multifamily developments were built from 2018-Year-to-Date (YTD) 2019 totaling over 2,000 units. Several of these buildings have just begun to lease, which is attributing to the higher vacancy rate over the last two years. However, increasing population growth over the past decade as well as projected growth over the next decade correlate to increased housing demand in the County. The Denver market (including Douglas County), however, has experienced a slower growth rate. However, vacancy rates may increase over the next year with the projected influx in supply (over 2,000 units), which is expected to mostly be in the northern areas of the County. Pueblo County has a lower vacancy rate (four percent) caused by its smaller inventory and the lack of new multifamily development over the past three years.

Retail rents have been climbing in El Paso County over the past 10 years which have grown by 67 percent. Rents for the State (\$1,382) are nearly \$300 per unit higher than in El Paso County (\$1,101). Douglas County's rents (\$1,530) are even higher than Colorado's due to outward growth from Denver and the County's proximity to the City. Pueblo County's rents (\$883) are far lower than El Paso's, again due to its significantly smaller market.

El Paso County's recent and expected population growth is a strong indicator for increased housing demand in the County. Continual rent growth since 2009 suggest a strengthening market. Higher vacancy rates could reference slowing demand, however an influx supply to capture projected population growth is likely the leading factor. Increasing demand from population growth coupled with planned and projected new supply indicates increasing confidence in El Paso County's multifamily market.

Multifamily Trends



Source: Costar, Houseal Lavigne Associates

### Market-Rate Multifamily

- El Paso County is projected to gain 93,489 households between 2019 and 2050. Currently, 37 percent of the County's existing households are renters. This number is expected to increase to 41 percent, aligning with growing renter trends since 2000 and a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of three percent in renter households since 2010. Comparatively, the United States has experienced a 1.7-percent CAGR in rental households since 2010. Thus, renter housing is expected to be demanded at a greater rate than in previous years in the County.

- Currently, the average effective monthly rent for a multifamily unit in El Paso County is \$1,125. Effective rent is the gross rental rate minus any financial concessions such as periods of discounted rents or rent increases. Assuming households spend up to 30 percent of their annual income on housing, a household would need to earn \$45,000 annually to afford the effective rent.
- Accounting for the number of households that earn at least \$45,000 per year and subtracting the 2,619 units in the 20 under-construction or planned apartments across the County, El Paso County will need approximately 14,613 market-rate units between 2019 and 2050.

Market-Rate Rental Unit Analysis	
	El Paso County 2019 - 2050
Household Growth	93,489
Renter Percentage	41%
Potential New Renters	38,330
Renter Households Earning At Least \$45,000	45%
Potential Income-Qualified Renters	17,232
Planned Market-Rate Units	2,619
El Paso County Market-Rate Apartment Demand	14,613

Source: American Community Survey; Woods & Poole; CoStar; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Attainable Rental Unit Analysis	
	El Paso County 2019 - 2050
Household Growth	93,489
Renter Percentage	41%
Potential New Renters	38,330
Renter Households Earning Less Than \$45,000	55%
Potential Income-Qualified Renters	21,099
Planned Affordable Units	300
El Paso County Attainable Apartment Demand	20,799

Source: American Community Survey; Woods & Poole; CoStar; Houseal Lavigne Associates

### Attainable Multifamily

When discussing affordable housing, and to effectively communicate with all County residents, it is important to establish the difference between affordable housing and market-rate housing. For the purposes of this report and the El Paso County Master Plan, "attainable housing" is defined as units as costing no more than 30 percent of annual income. Naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) is comprised of market-rate housing and operates without subsidy. NOAH properties provide housing at rates affordable to low- and moderate-income households. "Affordable housing" refers to units that are made affordable through means of various subsidies provided by the local, state, or federal government.

- Currently, El Paso County has about 53 properties totaling just over 3,800 affordable housing units (those that utilize some form of subsidy), 97 percent of which are in the City of Colorado Springs.
- Roughly 55 percent of renter households in El Paso County earn less than \$45,000 a year (the annual income needed to afford the average effective monthly rent for a multifamily unit in El Paso County). Accounting for the 300 affordable (with some form of subsidy) planned and under-construction units, El Paso will have a potential demand for 20,799 attainable units.
- The El Paso County Economic Development Department and the El Paso County Housing Authority (EPCHA) administer several housing funds to help provide attainable housing options throughout the County. In 2018, they helped open a 180-unit senior housing development using state housing tax credits. The two organizations also helped 227 existing County households procure housing assistance. Continued efforts from the Economic Development Department and EPCHA could help meet the projected attainable housing demand in El Paso County.

### Group Quarters

With its strong military presence (five installations) as well as several higher-education institutions, El Paso County has a significant number of its population living in group quarters. Group quarters are nontraditional residences where a group of people reside (permanently or temporarily), and the owner of the property provides housing and/or services for the residents. Group quarters residents are most commonly unrelated and do not require a traditional housing type. They often include college/university residence halls, military barracks, nursing homes, and correctional facilities. The Military Base Compatibility section of this document provides an overview of the military installations located in El Paso County including each base's current population estimate. A more detailed study of the military presence and its role in El Paso County and the entire Pikes Peak region can be found in the recently completed Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). The JLUS was completed by HB&A for the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG).

## Existing Housing Programs

Several housing programs administered by El Paso County Economic Development Department currently operate within El Paso County to help provide communities with suitable living environments as well as assistance to homeowners for repairs and rehabilitations.

- **Single Family Turnkey Plus Mortgage Program** – Provides a partially forgivable Down Payment Assistance (DPA) Loan to eligible individuals and families who want to purchase a home anywhere in El Paso County.
- **Single Family Housing Rehabilitation Program** – Provides eligible County residents with a grant or loan funding to remove accessibility barriers for person with disabilities as well as health and safety improvements to the home.

- **Multifamily Mortgage Bond Program** – Finances the development of multifamily housing through the issuance of tax-exempt bonds in return for some or all units set aside for County residents of low- to moderate-income.
- **Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) Program** – Allows qualifying borrowers to receive an annual federal income tax credit equal to 50% of the annual interest they pay on their mortgage loan.
- **Housing Trust Fund** – An internally self-sustained fund available in the form of loans or the direct purchase of services that prioritizes the development of new, affordable, and accessible housing units.
- **Housing Resource Hotlines** – Phone-based assistance available to County residents in need of housing resources.

## Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides local governments, in conjunction with citizen participation, the opportunity to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG prioritizes activities benefiting low- and moderate-income residents, aiding in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or meeting an urgent community need.

The following reports were conducted by the County to inform CDBG prioritization:

- **2017-2021 Assessment of Fair Housing Report** – Assesses fair housing conditions and identifies issues in El Paso County.
- **2017-2021 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Plan** – Five-year plan planning document that identifies housing, community, and economic development needs throughout the County and outlines strategies for prioritizing and addressing needs.
- **2018 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan** – Compilation of prioritized and objectives and activities to be undertaken in 2018 that is informed by the Consolidated Plan and the Fair Housing Assessment.
- **2017 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)** – Report outlining the progress the jurisdiction has made in carrying out its strategic and action plans.

## Local and State Housing Authorities

Local and state housing authorities are established in El Paso County to help promote affordable housing and community development within their respective geographies. These organizations facilitate the operations of various programs to provide needs such as Section 8 housing, public housing, senior housing, loans and bonds, and tax credit partnerships. The following Housing Authorities are located within the County:

- El Paso County Housing Authority;
- Colorado Springs Housing Authority;
- Fountain Housing Authority; and
- Colorado Housing Finance Authority.

## Key Findings Summary for Existing Development Setting

Key findings are those topics and subtopics that arose during the first phase of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. The topics result from the public input received from citizen participation, guidance from the El Paso County Master Plan Advisory Committee, and other professional insight based on present conditions and past studies, plans, and reports. The key findings are objective statements founded on thorough research and investigation.

## Development in El Paso County

### County Growth

- El Paso County's population is growing, contributing to development pressure, and requires planning measures. Important considerations for planning measures include:
  - Locations and boundaries for growth;
  - Land use compatibility;
  - Context-sensitive development and buffering;
  - Infrastructure provision;
  - Development that pays for itself or does not place a cost-burden on the County; and
  - Preservation of rural areas and open spaces are priorities for many County residents.

### Community Perception of Growth

- The community values and wants a transparent development process, including better awareness and participation in development processes.
- Concerns exist over the influence of developers in the development process.
- Some residents feel that development (or zoning) requirements could be stronger.
- Growth in El Paso County has been criticized as "sprawl" or overdevelopment that lacks flexibility and creativity.
- Proponents of the County's Small Area Plans want to retain relevant growth concepts from those plans.
- Some residents do not want to see any change.
- Major community concerns include environmental protection and integrity of water supply and well quality.

### Leapfrog Development

- Banning Lewis Ranch (undeveloped land recently annexed by Colorado Springs), and other geographic or physical constraints, such as the Front Range, and Coral Bluffs, have contributed to leapfrog development in El Paso County. Leapfrog development is growth that requires the extension of public facilities beyond intervening undeveloped areas, or far from existing public service opportunities.
- Future growth area considerations include mitigating the impact of leapfrog development, and understanding the interrelationship of growth in incorporated areas, like in City of Colorado Springs, and development in the County planning area.

### Military Base Compatibility

- Land use and development near and immediately adjacent to existing military installations require additional consideration with regards to the suitability of development and the potential for impacts or interference with military lands and potential future military base expansions.

### Community Access to Services and Basic Needs

- Some areas of the County lack access to services and amenities.
- Non-rural residential development requires proximate access to commercial development, for convenience goods and services, such as groceries or gas.
- Communities require formal or informal social gathering spaces, such as places of worship, coffee shops, or parks.
- Other needs include improved transportation infrastructure, including road quality and connectivity, and internet or wireless network improvements.

### Support for Rural Communities

- Rural centers, such as Peyton or Ellicott, need a balanced approach for development.
- There are unique tradeoffs at play in rural communities, with a desire to preserve rural character, growing housing pressure in the County, and demands for improved access to services, needs, and employment opportunities.
- Important transportation routes, such as Highway 24 to Peyton, are vital to the quality of life for rural community residents and all rural areas.

### Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Open Space

- Agricultural land is a valuable resource in El Paso County that can be preserved through careful planning. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, El Paso County had an estimated 1,345 active farms with 630,033 acres in production generating \$31.9 million in crop and livestock sales. Agricultural land will also play an important role in accommodating future development, particularly in the western parts of the County.
- Mineral extraction activities in El Paso County require planning considerations for environmental preservation and resource preservations, as mandated by the Preservation of Commercial Mineral Deposits Act of 1973.
- Development near natural landmarks, federal or state conservation lands, parks, or preserved open spaces require consideration for potential impacts and opportunities for expansion of open space or conservation areas, preservation of scenic views, and protection of geological or archaeological features.

### Zoning and Development Controls

#### Zoning Map Boundaries

- The County Zoning Map can establish districts that provide effective separation of incompatible land uses and development types.
- Zoning districts should be updated to correspond with *Your El Paso Master Plan* future land use planning.
- Zoning districts can permit a mix of uses with flexible regulations to get better development outcomes that adapt to changing market realities and uphold high standards for quality development.
- Zoning districts can influence the future development or stability of rural areas, and thus require careful consideration when mapped.

### Land Use Compatibility and Review

- Zoning establishes which land uses are suitable in a district and which land uses are incompatible as neighbors, or need additional design requirements.
  - Context-sensitive development means that the review of development plans and proposals requires consideration to separate, buffer, or eliminate incompatibility with surrounding land and that is sensitive to the existing context.
- #### Code Enforcement
- Code enforcement is a concern for many County residents. Violations that are common in El Paso County include junk or inoperable vehicles, trailer storage, overgrown weeds, and property maintenance.
  - Construction noise and light pollution (night-sky preservation) are also concerns voiced by County residents.
  - Gunfire in residential areas is tied to zoning districts, however rural areas are becoming more inhabited, leading to conflict between rural gun use and residential development.

### Changing Expectations for Developers

- Developer accountability is a role that can be addressed by zoning or development controls.
- The County can and does apply impact fees to developments, such as for schools, however it does not use them for other services like fire protection.
- Development approval in El Paso County is a public process that requires notice and public hearing for critical or controversial decisions, however this process may need strengthening.
- New development requirements such as affordable housing requirements, or density bonuses for open space preservation, may fit in some areas of the County, but not in others.
- Developers in El Paso County want fair certainty about investment they are making in the community.

## Economic Development

### A Diverse Economy

- El Paso County maintains a diverse economy with significant employers in a wide range of sectors.
- The County is making strides towards the implementation of business incentives, small business support, and other community initiatives.
- Efforts directed at business attraction, retention, and growth are focused in key areas, such as in Enterprise Zones.

### Workforce Development

- Some County residents feel that El Paso County needs more jobs for the younger population.
- Local post-secondary education options, such as Pikes Peak Community College, are assets for workforce development in El Paso County.
- Access to jobs and affordable housing options are workforce development issues, including for young El Paso County residents.

### Employment Opportunities

- There are limited areas of existing development that support private employment in El Paso County.
- More than one fifth of all El Paso County residents are employed outside of the County.
- A diverse economy in El Paso County can support both public employers (such as military) and private employers in locations that are accessible to the greatest number of residents. Employment growth in El Paso County can also benefit from planned employment areas, a growing population, and County economic development initiatives.

## Housing

### Housing Diversity

- The housing stock in El Paso County is primarily made up of single detached homes, and this is likely to remain the dominant housing form.
- Single attached housing, such as courtyard homes, patio homes, or townhomes, or “missing middle” forms of housing, which include higher-density housing options, may be appropriate for some parts of El Paso County, such as in suburban areas, but not all areas.
- Apartments or condominiums may have a market in some parts of El Paso County, such as in regional or mixed-use centers.

- The Colorado Construction Defect Action Reform Act (CDARA) has raised developers’ insurance and building costs which in effect can discourage the development of new condominiums in Colorado.
- Some residents of El Paso County would like to see new or atypical forms of housing development, such as tiny homes, accessory dwelling units, or co-housing options.
- A diverse housing stock that includes a range of housing types and sizes can accommodate all residents of El Paso County.

### Aging in Place and Accessibility

- Residential development and local housing stock need to support residents who want to “age in place”, staying near their communities, families, and health support networks, as they grow older. Support for aging in place requires accessibility and mobility options, and the provision of community facilities.
- Some residents in El Paso County want to see development of 55+ communities, one-story homes, and other senior living options.
- Universal design is a building construction method intended to meet the needs of all people, including the elderly or disabled such as disabled veterans.

### Affordable Housing

- Market rate rentals in El Paso County have experienced rent increases.
- Naturally occurring affordable housing is comprised of market-rate housing that operates without subsidy, but still provides housing at rates affordable to low- and moderate-income households.
- A lack of affordable housing options in El Paso County is a concern for some residents.
- Short-term rentals (such as AirBnB) take units which may otherwise be rented, out of the housing market.
- Low income housing, or subsidized housing, was identified as needed by some County residents, and many expressed their concern about homelessness in the County.
- Homeless people in El Paso County are aided by local housing authorities and missions, and while some may feel it is a city issue, homelessness also impacts unincorporated areas of the County.

### Quality of Life

- Some El Paso County residents want additional commercial goods and services, especially grocery stores, near where they live.
- There are limited commercial options in most of El Paso County, and outside of the Falcon area.
- Other important quality of life factors for residential areas include access to parks, trails, and walkable neighborhoods.

# CHAPTER 3 TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

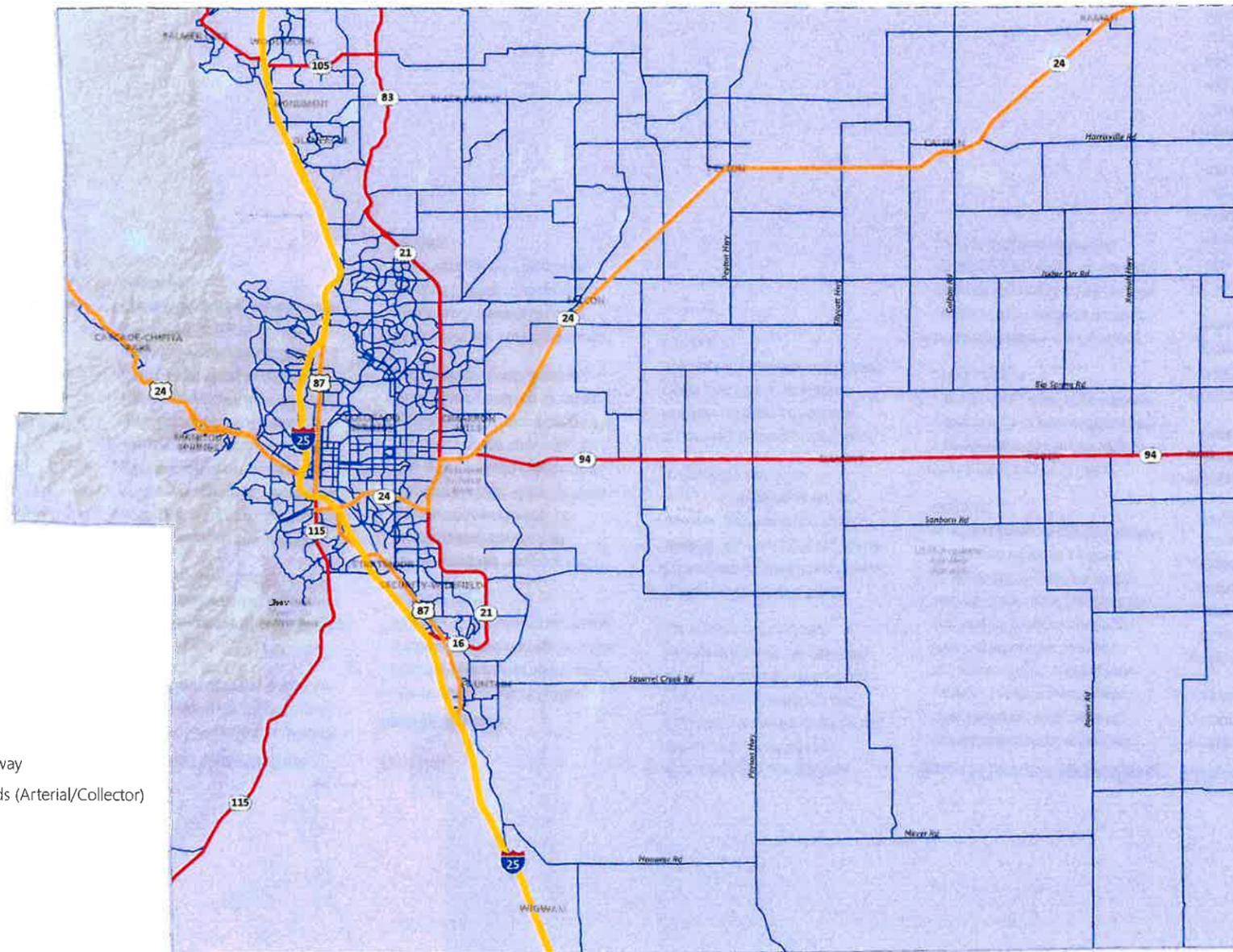
The Transportation and Mobility section provides an overview of El Paso County's existing transportation network. It summarizes the existing conditions for roadways, transportation alternatives, such as public transportation, bicyclists and pedestrians, and airports in the County.

## Roadways

The roadway system in El Paso County spans a distance of 42 miles from its north to south borders, and 85 miles from east to west. The County's road network provides essential mobility for all parts of the County. Roadways in El Paso County may fall under the ownership and maintenance jurisdiction of a number of different entities, including the Colorado Department of Transportation, El Paso County Department of Public Works, or to transportation arm of the municipality in which the road is located.

### Roadway Classification

-  Interstate Highway
-  State Highway
-  U.S. Highway
-  Major Roads (Arterial/Collector)



Each County road is classified based on criteria set forth by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). These functional classifications describe the characteristics a road based on the level of access and mobility provided to vehicles. As points of access increase to a roadway, typically the mobility, or speed along the route, decreases. The table illustrates the meaning of each functional classification, based on FHWA criteria.

### El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update (2016)

The 2016 Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP) is a long-range plan to keep pace with the dynamic nature of growth and infrastructure within the County. The MTCP looks to create an updated vision for the future transportation in the County as well as a prioritized list of transportation improvements. Funding strategies as well as policies are addressed to ensure the implementation of the completed plan.

Classification	Description of Roadway
<b>Interstate</b>	Limited access and high speeds Accommodates a variety of traffic types, including passenger vehicles and trucks
<b>Arterial</b>	Serves major activity centers with the highest traffic volume and longest trip demands Typically connects all or nearly all urbanized areas and provides an integrated network of continuous routes Limited land access
<b>Collector</b>	Serves a critical role in the roadway network by gathering traffic from Local Roads and funneling it to the Arterial network Typically used for trips of moderate length and can link smaller cities and towns Provides moderate land access
<b>Local</b>	Primarily provides access to adjacent land Accounts for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage Typically does not carry through traffic and provides access to Collectors

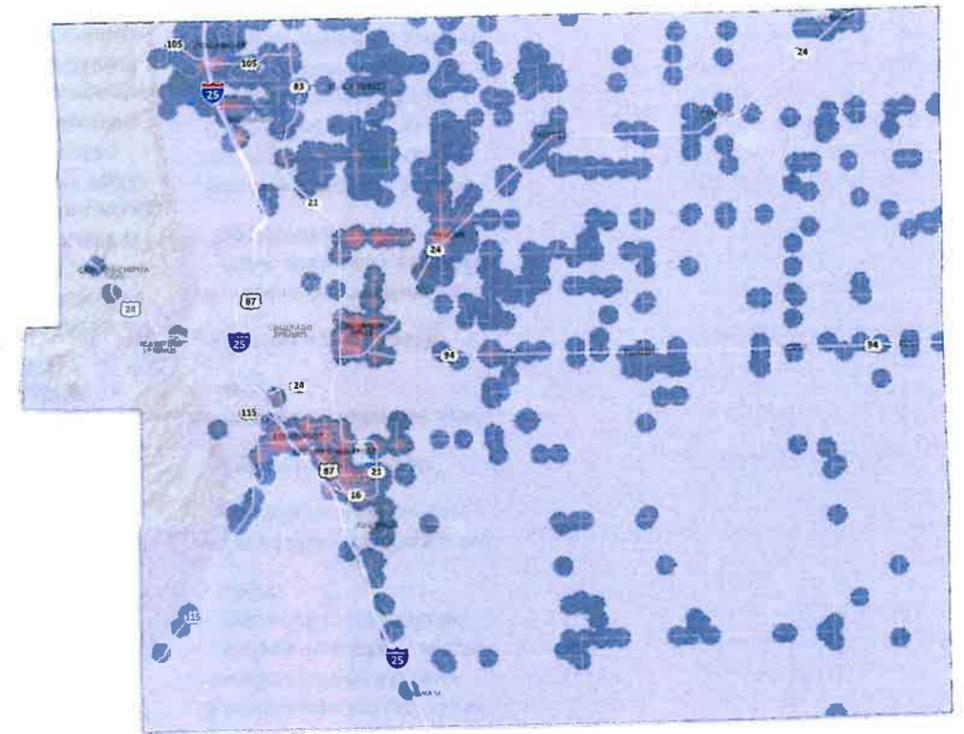
Improvements suggested by the plan are grouped into the following categories:

- Paving/Repaving Projects;
- Rural County Road Upgrades;
- New Road Connections;
- State Highway Capacity Improvements; and
- County Road Capacity Improvements.

As part of the Your El Paso County Master Plan process, recommended improvements will be mapped and reviewed alongside preliminary land use and development recommendations. This will help prioritize proposed roadway and multimodal improvements and identify areas where additional study may be required to revise proposed MTCP recommendations.

### Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2018)

The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) developed three development land use scenarios, a socioeconomic forecast, and a transportation needs report to inform the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). These elements look at socioeconomic trends within the planning area, existing conditions of the current transportation infrastructure, and potential sites of future population and job growth throughout El Paso County in order to prioritize sites of interest as well as infrastructure that should be addressed or developed to accommodate future needs of the County.



**Average Daily Traffic Counts**

- Low Traffic Counts
- High Traffic Counts

The three imagined scenarios are as follows:

- **Infill Scenario** – new growth and development occur primarily in already developed areas
- **Dispersed Development Scenario** – already-developed areas and existing activity centers remain stable, while the majority of new growth and development is more dispersed
- **New Centers Scenario** – already developed areas and existing activity centers remain stable, while the majority of growth and development occurs in new activity centers

Although PPACG does not endorse any of the following land use scenarios, it is important to recognize the costs and benefits of different patterns of development in the region:

- The Infill and New Centers scenarios yield the greatest access to transit from the region's jobs and housing.
- The Dispersed and New Centers scenarios produce smaller increases in PM peak hour travel time than the Infill scenario.
- The Infill and New Centers scenarios result in lower residential water consumption than the Dispersed Development scenario.

### PlanCOS: Strong Connections (2019)

The City of Colorado Springs road network is closely tied to all surrounding County regions. The City recently adopted a new outlook on transportation in the PlanCOS comprehensive plan. Its Strong Connections component include a vision is to adapt to how the City moves by transforming its future generations' health and mobility needs, enhancing economic vibrancy, upgrading infrastructure, and improving regional connectivity. The key strategies for roadways outlined in the chapter include:

- Add non-motorized facilities to roadways.
- Adapt to and implement new technologies.
- Maximize existing capacity.
- Invest in smart technologies.

The plan recognizes that streets are more than a way to transport people, vehicles, and goods, and includes a holistic view of transportation planning for the interrelated networks of utilities, stormwater, and communications infrastructure that serve as the foundation of the City's basic support services.

### Colorado Department of Transportation Ongoing/Recent Plans

#### I-25 PEL: Colorado Springs Denver South Connection (2019)

The Colorado Springs Denver South Connection study was initiated by the Colorado Department of Transportation to identify immediate and longer-term solutions to I-25 which is vital to this region, connecting El Paso County to the Denver area. Congestion, high speeds, and climbing grades contribute to severe crashes as well as highway closures which lead to travel delays. The study looks to address safety, travel reliability, and mobility and prioritize future improvements by:

- Helping to identify, define, and prioritize projects based on the corridor's greatest needs.
- Identifying significant environmental constraints that may influence design options and/or delay project development with lengthy environmental reviews.
- Clarifying project costs, and identifying necessary financing and funding options to implement improvements.

#### US 24 Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (2018)

The US 24 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study was initiated by the Colorado Department of Transportation to examine existing transportation conditions and anticipated problem areas along the US 24 corridor in El Paso County between Powers Boulevard and the Town of Ramah. This important corridor connects Colorado Springs to Falcon, and to rural centers in the northeast County. The study identified and screened a reasonable range of potential transportation improvements to develop an implementation plan for projects to meet the operational, safety, and capacity needs along the corridor. The study recommended a number of improvements that include interchanges at high-traffic intersections, additional auxiliary lanes and traffic signals, and the widening of roadways.

Similar to the MTCP, recommended improvements from the PEL Study will be mapped and reviewed alongside preliminary land use and development recommendations.

### Alternative Transportation

Alternative Transportation includes any means of commuting other than by personal vehicle. This includes all forms of transit, bus, rail, or otherwise, and bicycles, scooters, skateboards, wheelchairs, or walking. The need for transit tends to increase as population density increases, and the popularity of other modes of travel continue to remain steady or grow. Opportunities for more transportation alternatives in El Paso County is, as such, an important area of focus in the long-term.

### Public Transportation

Public transportation options in El Paso County are limited between and often require pre-organized travel arrangements. Mountain Metro Transit offers limited bus route service outside Colorado Springs city limits into Manitou Springs and few unincorporated areas, such as bus service to Security-Widefield along Route #32. However, their bus operations focus primarily on servicing City residents. ADA or paratransit services are also limited to an urban service area.

In Spring 2019, Calhan Connection announced expanded three-times a day service on Monday through Thursday from Calhan to Colorado Springs with stops in Peyton and Falcon. Other transportation options such as vanpool are arranged through various social agencies or seniors' services in El Paso County, including through PPACG Agency on Aging, and El Paso Fountain Valley Senior Citizens Center.

#### Colorado Springs 2040 Regional Transportation Plan – Transit (2015)

The City of Colorado Springs Transit Services Division and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) partnered to examine the public transit services provided throughout the PPACG area and create a transit Plan and a Specialized Transportation Coordination Plan as elements to be included in the PPACG 2040 Moving Forward Regional Transportation Plan (2040 RTP).

Objectives of the Transit Plan include:

- Provide transportation choice.
- Improve access to jobs, schools, medical facilities, and other services, especially for people without other transportation options.
- Create efficiencies and improve cost effectiveness of services.
- Provide congestion relief.
- Promote environmental stewardship.
- Promote economic vitality.
- Promote the coordination of public, private, and non-profit transportation services.

Recommendations for this plan focus on expanding the current transit market to offer greater transportation choice for passengers, including incremental increases in frequency, span, and quality of services.

**Colorado Statewide Transit Plan (2015)**

The Colorado Statewide Transit Plan is the first plan to establish a framework for creating an integrated statewide transit system that meets the mobility needs of the residents of Colorado, initiated by the State's Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) within CDOT. The plan compiles recommendations from previous plans conducted by the DTR in order to provide a comprehensive picture of existing and future transit in the state. The plan supports programs and projects that:

- Increase availability and attractiveness of transit through effective intermodal connections including first and last mile connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Make transit more time-competitive with automobile travel.
- Maximize the role of transit within the broader transportation system to improve mobility, enhance system capacity, and improve system efficiency.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

**Bicyclists and Pedestrians**

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure provide mobility options for those who do not have access to a vehicle or who choose to bike or walk for trips. Roadway design, access to bike lanes, trails and sidewalks, can all greatly impact the bicycle and pedestrian environment. Existing designated facilities for walking, jogging, and biking tend to be limited to recreational trails and paths, rather than oriented towards those looking to go from destination to destination.

El Paso County also features a very diverse and mountainous or hilly terrain, with spread out development, which can make it difficult for effective provision of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, although new development can be required to by the County to provide improvements, such as sidewalks. Sidewalks in the County are found in Security-Widefield, Cimarron Hills, and parts of Falcon and Gleneagle.

**El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan Update (2016)**

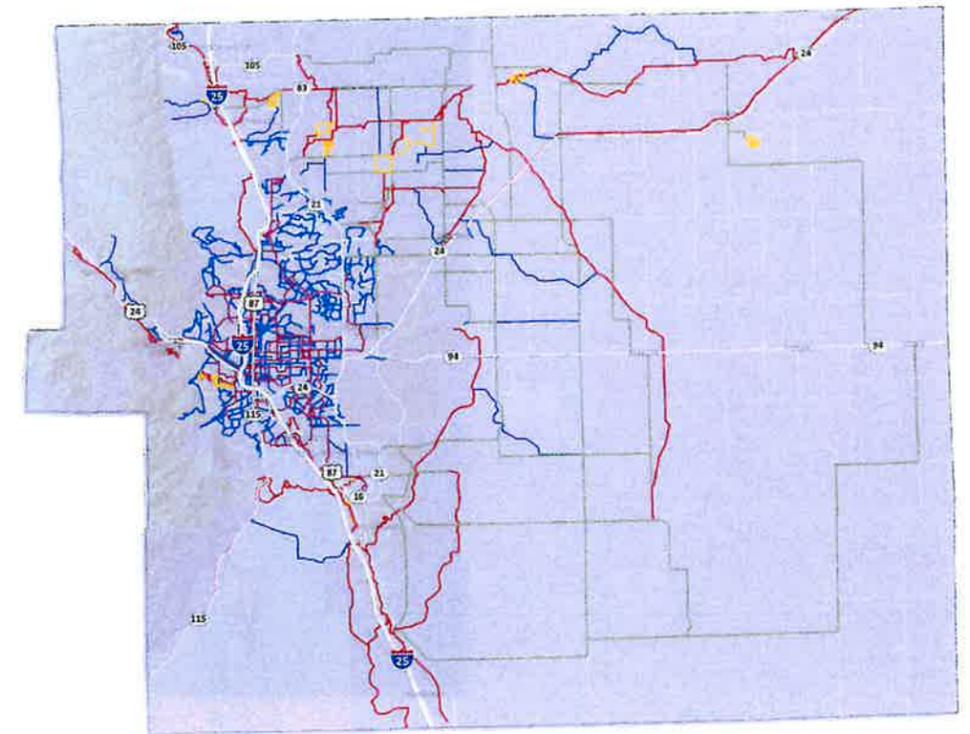
The MTCP envisions bicycling and walking as healthy alternatives to the automobile or for recreational purposes and recognizes a need to expand bike and pedestrian facilities within the unincorporated areas of the County. The plan recommends a network of off-street trails to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians categorized into the following:

- **Primary Regional Trails** – trails intended to link and provide access to recreation areas of regional significance, local communities, and commuting opportunities.
- **Secondary Regional Trails** – trails intended to link and provide access to Primary Regional Trails, recreation areas of local significance, local communities, and commuting opportunities.
- **Urban Bike Network** – trails that are existing or proposed located in the incorporated areas of El Paso County.

**COS Bikes! Colorado Springs Bike Master Plan (2018)**

The COS Bikes! Plan plans for bicycle transportation, rather than recreational purposes, in order to change how residents and tourists perceive bicycle use in Colorado Springs. The City hopes to make it easier for people to move around, including those who do not have the option of automobile travel. The plan's goals include:

- Promoting a stronger bicycle identity;
- Building a better on-street bike network; and
- Designing more bicycle friendly streets.



**Alternative Transportation**

- Primary Regional Trail
- Secondary Regional Trail
- Internal Park Trail
- Proposed Bicycle Routes
- Urban Bike Network
- Mountain Metro Transit Bus Routes

## Airports

Airports in El Paso County contribute to the strength of the local economy, and close local ties to military operations, including the US Air Force Academy, Peterson and Schriever Air Force Bases, and Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, make air travel and airport planning a priority issue for the County.

### Colorado Springs Airport

Colorado Springs Airport (COS) is a primary commercial service airport with an airfield in operation since 1925. The airport currently operates two parallel runways, one crosswind runway, and an extensive taxiway system. COS is also a joint use civilian and military airport, and Peterson Air Force Base is located just to the north of the airport. The airport is the second busiest commercial service airport in Colorado.

Airlines currently operating out of COS include American Airlines, Delta, Frontier, United, and FedEx Express, with year-round direct passenger service to Dallas/Fort Worth, Chicago-O'Hare, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Orlando, Phoenix, Houston, Los Angeles, and Denver.

The Denver Regional Council of Governments produced an Airport Compatible Land Use Design Handbook, which identified major planning considerations for communities near airports, such as:

- Maintaining safe airspace around airports;
- Planning for noise compatibility around airports;
- Safety areas near airports; and
- Planning compatible uses in areas of frequent aircraft overflight.

### Colorado Springs Airport Master Plan (2013)

The Colorado Springs Airport Master Plan aims to proactively develop plans for the future that are flexible and meet the needs of the dynamic air travel industry that is constantly evolving. The most recent plan update addresses changes in service, growth of passengers, and changes to segments in the aviation market.

The plan provides conceptual strategies for the future development of the airport campus that will serve each major function of the airport including:

- Commercial passenger service;
- Air cargo and freight transport;
- General aviation activity; and
- Military facilities.

### Meadow Lake Airport

The Meadow Lake Airport Association is a non-profit corporation that owns and operates the Meadow Lake Airport. Located just to the east of Falcon, off of Highway 24, Meadow Lake is a public use airport and a general aviation reliever airport for COS. It is the largest privately owned airport in Colorado. There are several aviation-related businesses on the airfield including flying schools and aircraft maintenance facilities.

### Other Airports

A number of other airports presently exist in El Paso County, most of which are privately owned and operated. The only other public airport in the County, in addition to Colorado Springs and Meadow Lake Airports, is Calhan Airport, in the northeast of the County.

There are at least 15 private helipads or airfields in the County. Each military installation operates private airfields at five locations across the County.

Private airports have unique land use compatibility issues like land use encroachments, safety, and finding harmony with new and existing County development.

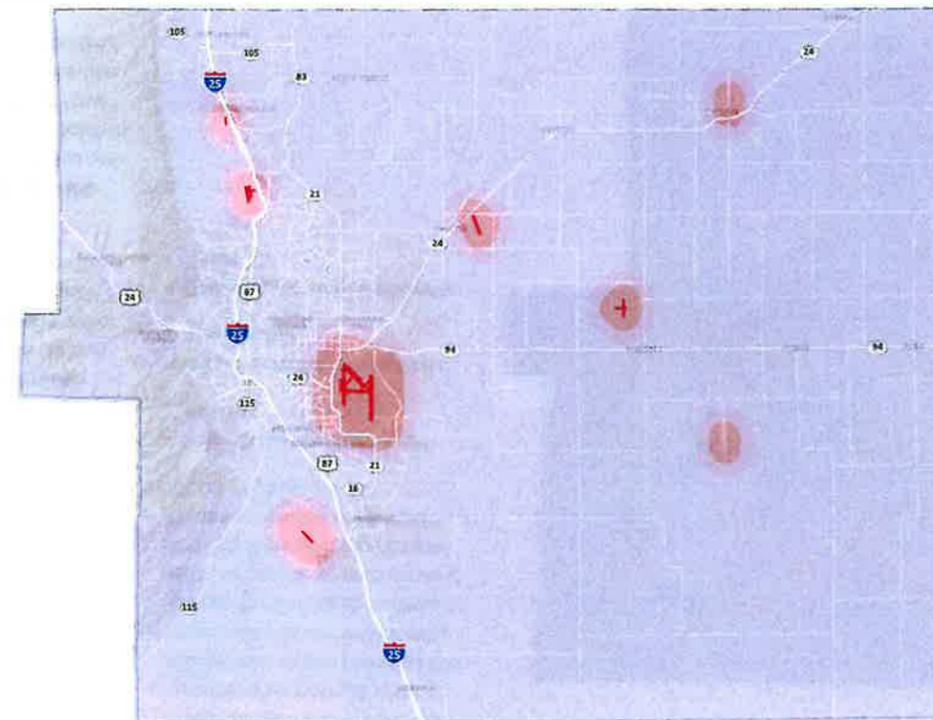
### Airport Overlay Zoning Areas

#### Horizontal Surface

This overlay zoning area is typically elliptical in shape and should be clear of any use that generates visual obstructions, attracts wildlife, or is structurally tall as aircrafts operate at lower altitudes and speeds in this area.

#### Conical Surface

This overlay zoning area is the outermost zone of the airport overlay zoning areas and has the least number of land use restrictions. The zone is intended to prevent the development of any land uses that may have issues regarding significant height limitations, visual obstructions, or attracting wildlife.



### Airports

- Airport Runway
- Horizontal Surface
- Conical Surface

## Key Findings Summary for Transportation and Mobility

Key findings are those topics and subtopics that arose during the first phase of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. The topics result from the public input received from citizen participation, guidance from the El Paso County Master Plan Advisory Committee, and other professional insight based on present conditions and past studies, plans, and reports. The key findings are objective statements founded on thorough research and investigation.

### Roadways

#### Traffic and Congestion

- There are capacity issues at peak times along arterials and collectors in El Paso County due to high volumes of commuter and freight traffic.
- Residents cite traffic concerns along I-25, Highway 83, and Highway 24 to the east.
- Congestion can also be an issue towards Cascade along Highway 24 to the west.
- Improving road capacity as well as enhancing or adding public transportation in El Paso County is a multi-jurisdictional issue that requires a coordinated approach.

### Connectivity

- Road connections and tie-ins between destinations are vital to improving the roadway network
- For instance, residents cite a need for a connection from Stapleton Drive in Falcon to the west
- Residents cite a need for having two points of access, or two ways in and out, of a residential subdivision for safety and circulation reasons.

- A lack of east-west connections in the road network in El Paso County make recent improvements like the widening of Woodmen Road, vital to local transportation needs

### Road Maintenance and Safety

- El Paso County has limited resources when it comes to maintenance, repair, and plowing of County roads, which include more than 700 miles of roadways, and has to prioritize County projects.

- Funding for road infrastructure projects is an important topic for future road maintenance and new road construction, as roadway needs exceed current funding. It is also an important topic for future bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Concerns for emergency response times and evacuation routes during fire-related or other emergency road closures are also issues to address.

### Future Plans

- Planning for future roadway changes and transportation demand changes, such as for new and expanding development areas in the County, autonomous vehicles, or improved transportation engineering, like using roundabouts, must be thoughtfully planned with respect to context and potential local impact.

### Transportation Alternatives

#### Public Transportation

- Presently there is little public transportation available in unincorporated areas of El Paso County, despite having high travel volumes in and out of the Colorado Springs.
- Transit may not be attractive to County residents unless it is competitive in time, cost, or convenience when compared to driving
- Demand for public transportation tends to come from underserved populations, such as seniors, disabled, youth, or low-income community members
- Improving or adding public transportation in El Paso County is a multi-jurisdictional issue that requires a coordinated approach
- Public transportation ridership can reduce traffic congestion if adequately implemented
- Some residents cited the need for public transportation along Highway 24 to Cascade and ending outside of the County at Woodland Park

#### Alternative Facilities Improvements

- There is limited bicycle infrastructure in El Paso County, outside of existing recreational trails.
- Sidewalks exist in only denser, suburban locations in the County.
- As roadways connectivity is an important topic, so too is the potential for future connections for bicycle and pedestrian networks.

#### Bike and Pedestrian Safety

- Bike safety awareness is important for local County drivers.
- Improved bicycle network infrastructure, such as separated bike lanes, in turn can improve bike safety.
- Crosswalks, especially school crosswalks, and safe routes to school, are important considerations for transportation planning in the County, and future prioritization of improvements.

### Airports

#### Airport Topics

- Some residents feel that air service into Colorado Springs Airport should be improved, with additional airlines, flights, and local-based flight crews.
- Land use encroachments into airport-sensitive areas, such as runway protection and approach surfaces, and airport-compatible development are important land use planning topics for the County.
- Airport noise in residential or rural areas is a concern for some County residents.

## CHAPTER 4

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Community facilities include the various public and nonprofit services, utilities, and infrastructure that ensure a high quality of life for El Paso County residents and businesses. The County provides some of these services but is predominantly supplemented by partner organizations and other service providers within the County. An assessment of key service providers was completed to support the development of *Your El Paso Master Plan*.

### Local Government

The Board of County Commissioners is the main governing body for El Paso County with the powers as granted by the General Assembly of the Colorado State Legislature. The Board consists of five elected commissioners from five equally populated districts. The County government is not an independent governmental authority but rather a subdivision of the State. El Paso County's government consists of 12 departments, which include:

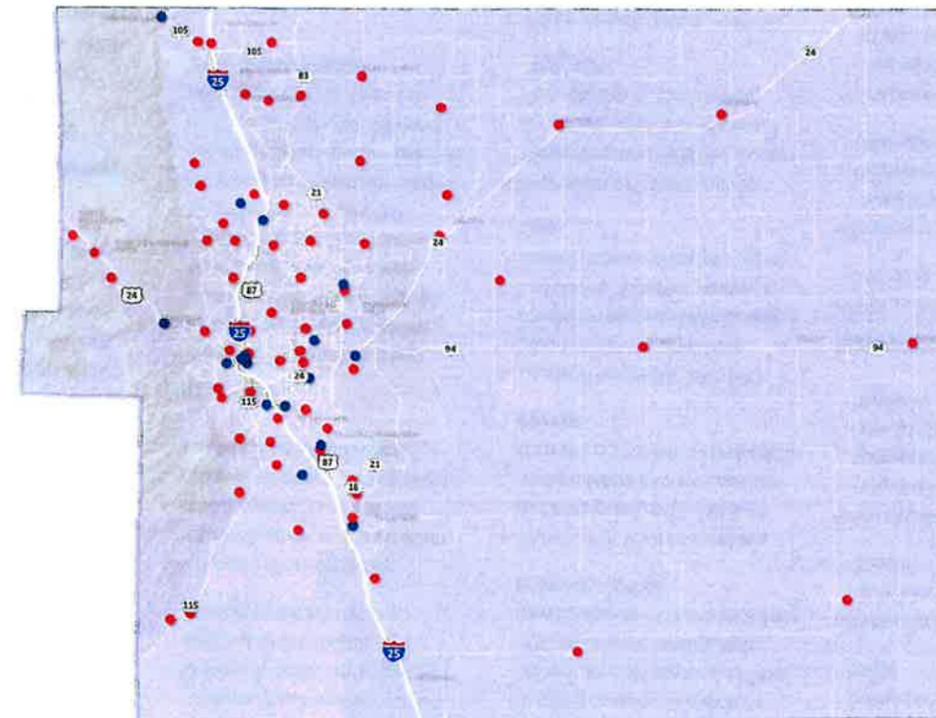
- Community Services;
- County Attorney;
- Economic Development;
- Elected Officials;
- Facilities and Strategic Infrastructure Management;
- Financial Services;
- Human Resources and Risk Management;
- Human Services;
- Information Technology;
- Public Information Office;
- Planning and Community Development; and
- Public Works.

Some departments have separate divisions within them that support a more detailed aspect of that department. For example, the Parks Division is housed under Community Services. El Paso County has roughly 54 facility locations across the 12 departments spread throughout the County. A majority of the facilities are maintenance facilities for parks or public works.

### Community Services Department Action Plan (2018)

The County's Community Services Action Plan outlines specific strategies for each County division to complete in support of five collective goals for the County:

- Maintain and promote a financially sustainable County government that is transparent and effective.
- Continue to enhance understanding of civic services and promote participation, engagement, and confidence in County government.
- Maintain and improve the County transportation system, facilities, infrastructure, and technology
- Consistently support regional economic strength.
- Strive to ensure a safe, secure, resilient, and healthy community.



### Public Safety

- Fire and Emergency Service Facility
- Law Enforcement Facility

## Public Safety

Public safety services in El Paso County include fire, sheriff, and emergency medical services. Each service is an independent entity but operates in coordination with the other two when necessary.

### Fire and Emergency Services

There are 68 fire and emergency services facilities across the County, including those affiliated to municipalities, within 21 Fire Districts. The Fire Districts count does not include the City of Colorado Springs, which is protected by its own fire department. Each district has a fire chief who is supported by firefighter staff, or volunteer firefighters who are more frequently relied on in the southeastern districts. The districts that include more densely populated areas have more staff than others.

Outreach conducted with Fire District representatives highlighted concerns about increasing response times due to the continued development in far lying areas. Similarly, the districts noted issues related to a lack of consideration for fire services and fire infrastructure requirements during the development process.

The El Paso County Emergency Services Authority (ESA) was established in 2014 between the City of Fountain and El Paso County to contract for the provision of ambulance service in El Paso County. Several parts in El Paso County rely on fire-based medical response, such as Tri Lakes/Monument, Ellicott, and Calhan.

### El Paso County Sheriff's Office

The County Sheriff's Office is tasked with duties set forth in Colorado Revised Statutes that are outlined in its mission to "provide the citizens of El Paso County effective and efficient public safety services." They manage and maintain several services across the County including general law enforcement in unincorporated areas, jailhouse operation, neighborhood watch and search and rescue coordination.

The office has five total facilities including the Metro Detention Center, the largest single detention facility in the State, which are served by nearly 900 employees in total.

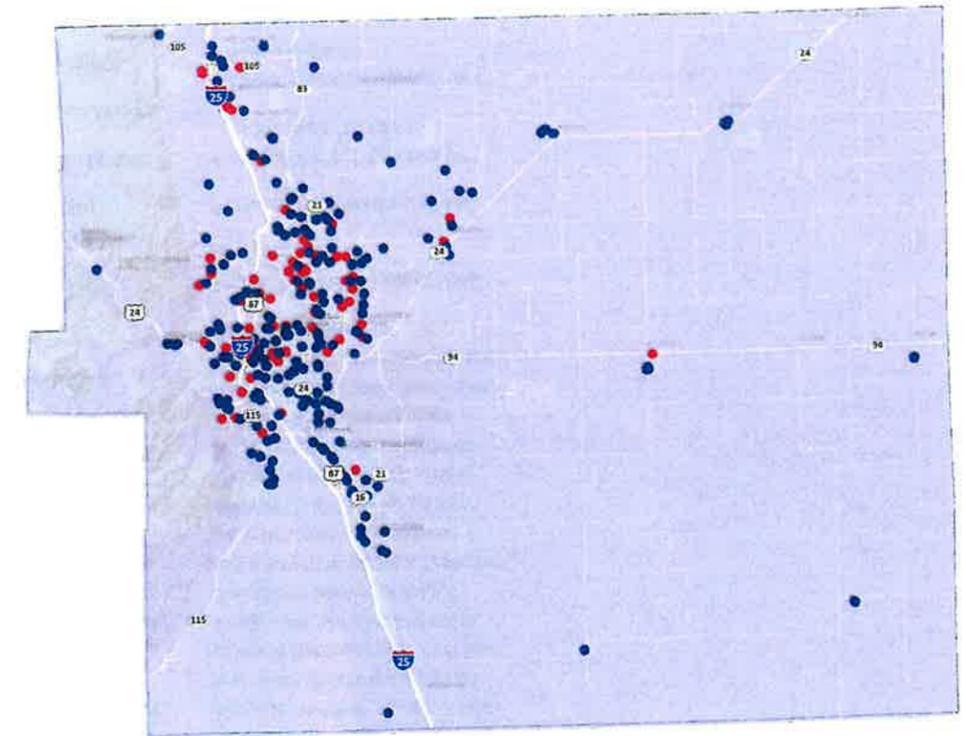
## Education

Seventeen public school districts provide primary education to students across the County. Within this system there are 219 schools for all grade levels, including some for adult education. These are supported by 69 private educational institutions, the majority of which are geared toward early learning years. Of the 288 total school facilities in the County, 23 percent of them are in unincorporated areas.

Most education facilities are located adjacent to a municipality, in an unincorporated area that was either skipped over by a municipality during an annexation, or between two municipalities that abut in different areas. In discussions with representatives from the school districts, some are at capacity for both staff and facilities, which also relates to a general lack of funding across all 17 Districts. The County population has grown significantly and quickly and is projected to continue to grow in the future, which will continue to put pressure on education facility providers.

## Infrastructure

The County provides various levels of service related to infrastructure and utilities, along with many other non-profit cooperatives, private businesses, or other public agencies. El Paso County's infrastructure systems are vital to the local economy, and to community health, safety, and security. It is crucial that agencies work together to plan for the future and to grow and maintain infrastructure so that current and future users are well-served. This coordination involves both private providers and public entities at state, county, and local levels.



### Education

- Public Schools
- Private Schools

## Public Works

El Paso County Department of Public Works provides three primary services:

- **Transportation** – Road maintenance, snow plowing, construction, and planning not managed by local municipal jurisdictions or by CDOT;
- **Fleet Management** – Maintenance of construction equipment, snow removal equipment, and landscape equipment owned by the County; and
- **Office of Emergency Management (OEM)** – Pikes Peak Regional OEM coordinates and prepares incident response agencies to deal with disasters in the County.

## Road Impact Fee Program

Public Works administers the Road Impact Fee, which is permitted and regulated by Section 104.5 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. This program creates a way of distributing costs among new developments to offset transportation improvements as part of new developments. The fee covers roads with high traffic counts and roads with regional significance. New development in unincorporated El Paso County has been subject to a County-wide Road Impact Fee since 2010. Beginning December 31, 2019, the fee will be paid by anyone building on any property in the unincorporated area of the County, and which receives a Building Permit either in a public hearing or administratively. This update also considered the future costs and projected areas of road improvements to the year 2040 and found that generally most roads will see an increase in vehicle trips as a result of an increase in population by the year 2040.

## Water

Water is a chief topic of conversation and concern in El Paso County. The water discussion focuses on a number of key issues related to adequate water supply, water quality, and well protection. Primary water sources within County include aquifers and snowmelt, often captured in reservoirs. Water is also pumped in from other locations outside the County.

El Paso County residents may be receiving water from one of a large number of water providers, like from a municipality or special district, or may rely on water from private wells. Special districts are self-governing, separate entities from municipalities, and special districts providing multiple services may be referred to as “metropolitan districts.” There are over 50 individual water providers operating in El Paso County, either as municipal utilities, metropolitan districts, or water and sanitation districts. A few of the largest water providers in the County include:

- Colorado Springs Utilities;
- Cherokee Metropolitan District;
- City of Fountain;
- Security Water and Sanitation District; and
- Town of Monument.

## El Paso County Water Master Plan (2019)

The newly adopted El Paso County Water Master Plan provides an outlook into the projected water supply needs to 2040 and 2060 and the water sources needed to meet these projections. The plan divides El Paso County into 10 planning regions to portray how different sections of the county currently obtain water and shows the projected water supply for each area. The plan establishes goals and proposed policies, with implementation strategies, and concluded with the following findings:

- There is a projected gap in water supply with a shortfall measuring 55,000 acre-feet (AF) by the year 2060.
- Continued reliance on the Denver Basin for water is not sustainable.
- Highest density growth should occur in areas that already have water providers.
- Collaboration between municipalities and unincorporated areas of the county will be vital to meeting future water supply needs.

## Colorado's Water Plan (2015)

Colorado's Water Plan examines the different river basins in the County and highlights the general usage for each basin and other pertinent environmental concerns. El Paso County is located mainly in the Arkansas River Basin. The plan identifies several issues pertinent to this basin, including:

- Meeting projected water supply gaps;
- The use of regional infrastructure development for cost-effective solutions to water supply gaps;
- Collaborating to find water supply sources during times of drought; and
- Forecasting droughts, and how to prepare for times of drought.

## Wastewater

Many County residents in rural residential areas rely on private septic systems for their wastewater management needs. However, areas with service providers for wastewater removal connect residents and businesses to sewer lines and wastewater treatment facilities located throughout the most populated regions of the County.

Wastewater treatment facilities in the County are operated by:

- Colorado Springs Utilities;
- Fort Carson;
- Fountain Sanitation District;
- Lower Fountain Metropolitan Sewage Disposal District;
- Monument Sanitation District;
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District;
- Security Sanitation District;
- United States Air Force Academy;
- Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant;
- Widefield Water and Sanitation District; and
- Woodmen Hills Metro District.

## PPACG Water Quality Management Plan (2010)

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments' Water Quality Management Plan reviews quality and other environment-related issues of the waterways in El Paso County and surrounding areas. The plan is born of a federal requirement to create a “208 plan” for water quality management. The plan is divided into watersheds and assesses the character, discharge points, nonpoint sources, and interest groups associated with each. Specific recommendations are made for each watershed related to:

- Land Use Planning and Development;
- Riparian and Wetland Areas;
- Source Water Protection for Public Water Supplies;
- Flooding and Stormwater and Management;
- Agriculture and Silviculture; and
- Wastewater Treatment Facilities; and
- Onsite Wastewater Systems.

### Other Utilities

Electric, gas, and telecommunications services are provided through an array of utilities that serve El Paso County. The County's recently adopted Broadband Strategic Plan highlights issues related to high-speed internet service in the County.

#### Electric

El Paso County is divided into territories served by five public or cooperative electric power service providers:

- **Colorado Springs Utilities** – Public entity that primarily serves the City of Colorado Springs and some surrounding areas.
- **Intermountain Rural Electric Association** – Nonprofit electric distribution cooperative that serves a northwestern portion of the County.
- **Mountain View Electric Association** – Electric cooperative that serves most of unincorporated El Paso County east of Colorado Springs.

- **Fountain Electric** – The City of Fountain Electric Department serves the City of Fountain.
- **Southeast Colorado Power Association** – Nonprofit cooperative electric utility that serves portions of southeast El Paso County.

#### Gas

Natural gas supply for El Paso County originates from rich basins located to the north and north-east of Denver and in the Rocky Mountains. Access to natural gas utilities in El Paso County is provided by a number of private companies that are regulated by the State of Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). According to DORA, the utilities that provide natural gas service are Xcel Energy, Black Hills Energy, SourceGas Distribution, Colorado Natural Gas, and Atmos Energy.

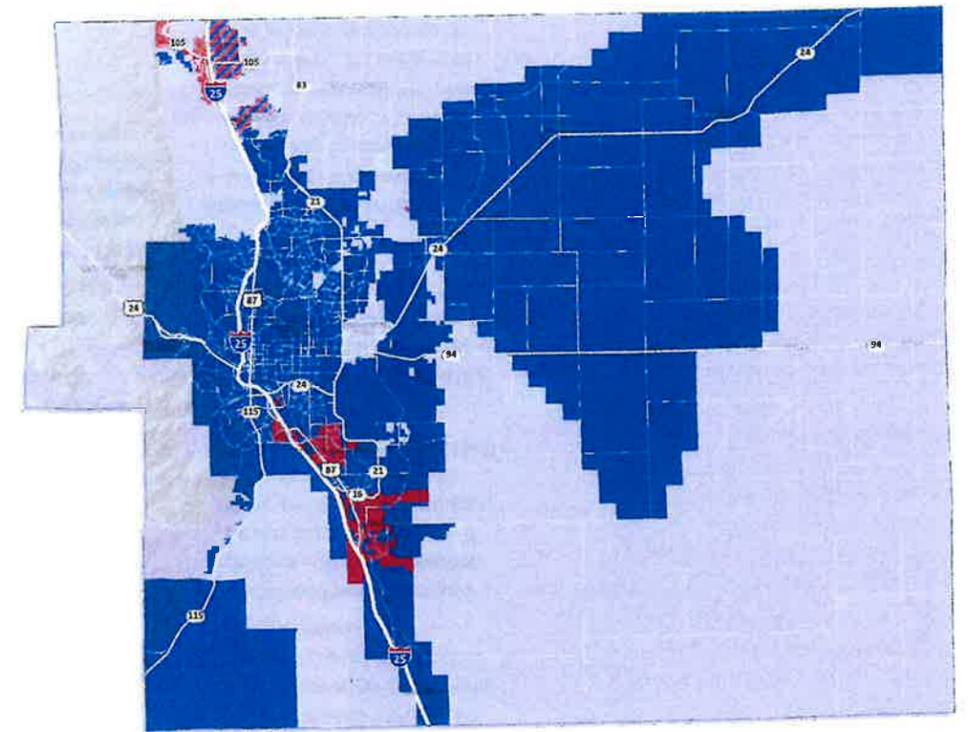
#### Telecommunications

Telecommunications utilities in El Paso County supply digital cable, DSL, and telephone services in a competitive private market with a variety of carriers. According to the Broadband Strategic Plan, while the County has more than 10 different internet service providers, the technologies used to deliver telecom services creates a highly divided level of service and resident satisfaction. Fiber optics and cable-based internet are available in most urban and high population density areas, but residents and businesses in more rural and lower population density areas are generally served by fixed wireless, cellular or through DSL technologies.

#### Broadband Strategic Plan (2018)

The focus of the County's Broadband Strategic Plan was to provide a detailed look into gaps in broadband coverage in El Paso County. It was completed through a series of surveys with residential and business interests along with meeting with private internet providers. Findings of these surveys showed a general lack of service among major providers in rural areas in the eastern part of the county. Key recommendations from the report include:

- Create public and private partnerships to extend broadband coverage.
- Identify targeted improvement zones and develop project strategies for those zones.
- Develop and formalize supportive public policy.
- Align projects to meet mutual needs.
- Identify a champion and provide resources to implement improvements.



Areas Served by Water and Sanitation

- Sanitation District
- Sanitation/Water District
- Water District

## Key Findings Summary for Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Key findings are those topics and subtopics that arose during the first phase of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. The topics result from the public input received from citizen participation, guidance from the El Paso County Master Plan Advisory Committee, and other professional insight based on present conditions and past studies, plans, and reports. The key findings are objective statements founded on thorough research and investigation.

### Local Government

#### Regulation

- Input from the community and partner agencies highlights a perception that government entities, from the local and county level, through regional and state levels tend to operate in silos. There is a desire for greater coordination between jurisdictions, particularly as it relates to growth and development.
- Some residents have expressed interest in further citizen participation and opportunities to engage and provide input on El Paso County projects and decision-making.
- Decision-making at the state level impacts the ability for El Paso County, and other local jurisdictions, to regulate certain causes or tax projects based on local needs, for instance the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR), has made it much more difficult to raise taxes for local needs.
- Some residents have expressed their desire to maintain lower income tax rates in the County.
- Taxes and funding continues to be a limiting factor in supporting improvements to and expansion of public services such as fire, parks, schools, and public works.

### Public Safety

#### Sheriff's Office

- Response times for emergency calls to the Sheriff's Office is a public safety concern in the vast County territory.
- Some residents have increased concerns about drug-related crime, illegal camping, trespassing, illegal marijuana production and sales, and gunfire in residential areas.
- Social and housing services that employ creative programs for the homeless population is a consideration for the County.

#### Fire Response

- Increasing fire response times for development in outlying parts of the County, in part due to a limited number of road connections, as well as general access to emergency services were key concerns.
- Poor roadways and a lack of maintenance, particularly in the rural areas of the County, can degrade fire trucks and equipment.
- Access to appropriate amounts of water in built areas is of concern to fire districts and some areas may not have adequate fire protection coverage.
- The County can consider the development of a Wildland Interface Code to help prevent and/or mitigate wildfire issues for developments in forested or grassland areas.

### Education

#### Growth and Development

- Population growth has caused a significant need for additional schools for all grade levels, particularly in the northern areas of the County.
- Some residents are concerned that developers do not cover the costs of new schools that are necessitated by the new development they build.
- School impact fees, which are used in many parts of the country to pay for school improvements, have been ruled unconstitutional by the Colorado Supreme Court.
- Without an upfront fee, new school facilities will often be needed in rapidly growing districts before higher property values have been realized.

#### Safety

- Automobile speed at major intersections near schools is a safety concern for students, and traffic safety near schools is an important consideration for the County.
- Park safety near schools is also a local concern.
- Due to growing security concerns at schools, school spending on security has also increased, however funding has not increased to cover these additional security costs.

#### Workforce Development

- School districts would like to establish partnerships for technical training and internships between high schools, colleges/universities, and key employers to help graduates enter the workforce.

### Public Works

#### Infrastructure Keeping Pace with Growth

- As the population grows, continual improvement and maintenance of County infrastructure will be needed.
- Coordination with other jurisdictional agencies, emergency service providers (fire, sheriff, EMS), and local utility providers is a major consideration for County infrastructure plans and projects.
- A major project that impacts El Paso County is the widening of Interstate 25 between Colorado Springs and Denver, or "The I-25 Gap Project."

#### Quality and Maintenance

- The County is constantly responding to changing and variable conditions for infrastructure. This includes constant maintenance of County roads due to large variations in climate across the County.
- Each year the County embarks on the paving, repaving, and maintenance of roads.
- Funding sources for County infrastructure projects is an important subject requiring continuous study.

## Water

### Supply and Demand

- A growing El Paso County contributes to higher water demand and places stress on a fragile and fragmented water supply chain.
- The County's Water Master Plan projects that by 2040 there will be sufficient water supply to serve at least 72% of the projected water demand, and that by 2060 that value could decrease to 56%.
- In 1986, the County enacted a subdivision regulation that developments needed to meet a "300-year rule" for withdrawal rates for all property not receiving water from another source. The Water Master Plan found that since the rule was enacted, it appears that there have been no significant land use pattern changes, and that low-density development has continued to occur throughout the County.
- Low-density residential development can contribute to higher water demands, primarily due to the irrigation volumes used on large lots. Other contributors to elevated water demand are land uses such as golf courses, industrial users (such as metal finishing), and agricultural irrigation.
- Use of water for agricultural purposes is an important consideration for sustainable long-term water plans for the County.
- High demand and lowered water supplies contribute to elevated water costs for County residents and businesses.

### Quality

- Water quality is an important public health and quality-of-life measure for El Paso County. Water sources in El Paso County require solutions for preservation and protection.
- Aquifers that supply rural domestic or household wells require preservation and protection, for both water quantity and quality.
- Some residents, particularly in the northeast and east areas of the County, feel that their property values and way of life are negatively impacted by increased water demand and development in the County. They feel that these factors may threaten the sustainability of private wells and are concerned about high costs associated with digging private wells to lower depths.
- Improved stormwater management practices can improve water quality in El Paso County, filtering run-off and slowing the impacts of major rain events.

### Consistency and Oversight

- There are numerous agencies that provide water, including municipalities and a legion of special districts. The fragmentation of water provision in El Paso County contributes to challenges related to regional coordination and water supply, and to additional costs related to groundwater protection and infrastructure provision.
- Residents of areas relying on smaller, individual well systems may eventually require some form of assistance in coordinating area access to new water sources, such as a centralized water source.
- The County wants to ensure adequate water supply for new development, and may need to review how this is being accomplished, in addition to working with local agencies towards a consolidated water system.
- Compliance with state or federal water regulations is an important consideration for water planning.

## Wastewater

### Relying on Sewer

- When septic systems are poorly maintained they can jeopardize water quality and public health.
- Shared sewer systems are typically built to withstand heavy usage and can better accommodate periods of heavy precipitation than septic systems. Once built, a sewer system can reduce risk and operating expenses incurred by property owners.
- Many communities across America do not permit subdivision of land for residential development without the implementation of a shared sewer, however this is not the case in El Paso County.
- The Cherokee Metropolitan District is looking to build a total reverse osmosis treatment plant that would be the first of its kind in Colorado, and generate potable water from wastewater.
- Opportunities for coordination and consolidation of sewer service providers are important considerations for infrastructure efficiency and environmental sustainability.

### Stormwater Management

- Regional considerations for stormwater management must be accounted for due to impacts of stormwater events in El Paso County on its communities, and neighboring counties.
- The County can apply stormwater regulations on development on major state projects, such as major roads, utilities, and airports, as per Land Development Code.
- Localized stormwater detention on development in El Paso County can employ stormwater best management practices, and mitigate flood and stormwater impacts, and soil erosion, under the guidance of the County's Planning and Community Development Department.
- The Clean Water Act, and other state and federal regulations are important considerations for wastewater planning.

## Other Utilities

### Utility Networks and Efficiencies

- Utility providers commented that infrastructure provision needs to be thoughtful and not incidental, and development should balance costs against infrastructure costs and resource constraints.
- Examples of thoughtful utility planning include the implementation of adequate utility easements in road widening or road improvement projects, and co-location opportunities for utility companies when utility trenching occurs on projects.
- Broadband coverage in El Paso County is a priority for the County and is studied in detail in the Broadband Strategic Plan.
- Rural areas in particular require improved access to broadband services and telecommunications (cellular) coverage.

## CHAPTER 5

# MILITARY BASE COMPATIBILITY

The importance of the military bases within El Paso County – its economy, culture, and land use – is a key part of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. Military-related installations within El Paso County play a defining economic role within the County. As per a recent study by Summit Economics, military generated a total economic output of \$17 billion and approximately 111,620 direct, indirect, and induced jobs in 2017.

Given the central role the military plays in the region, El Paso County has worked to support its military installations through its land use, transportation, and natural resource planning efforts. As the County continues to grow, ongoing efforts to support effective, coordinated planning efforts with military installations will help to maintain the quality of life of County residents, a robust economic base, and the viability of the key military missions that take place within the region.

### Military Installations in El Paso County

Existing military installations or bases in El Paso County are as follows:

#### Fort Carson

Fort Carson, the Mountain Post, is southwest of Colorado Springs. The large military base builds and maintains combat ready forces and is home to the 4th Infantry Division, Colorado Army National Guard, and other functions.

<b>Date Established</b>	1942
<b>Land Area</b>	137,404 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	98,409

#### Peterson Air Force Base (AFB)

Peterson AFB is home to the 21st Space Wing, which provides missile warning and space control in support of worldwide military operations. Other key units include multiple Air Force and joint headquarters functions and the 302nd Airlift Wing, which performs airdrop and airlift missions throughout the U.S. in support of national disaster response efforts.

<b>Date Established</b>	1942
<b>Land Area</b>	1,457 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	18,303

#### Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station (AFS)

Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, often simply referred to as "NORAD", hosts U.S. Strategic Command's Missile Warning Center and other key units. Its core functions are housed underground within the Cheyenne Mountain Complex where it performs global warning functions. Cheyenne Mountain AFS is under the command of the 21st Space Wing located at Peterson AFB.

<b>Date Established</b>	1967
<b>Land Area</b>	568 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	150

#### Schriever Air Force Base (AFB)

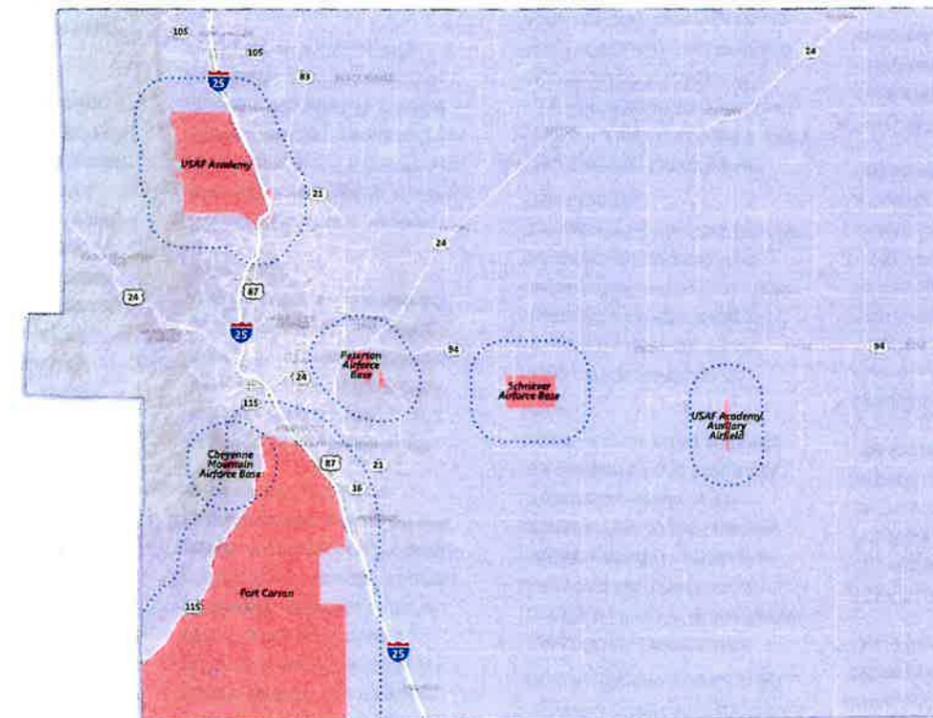
Schriever AFB is home of the 50th Space Wing, and performs both space and cyberspace warfighting operations in support of the military worldwide, including programs such as Global Position System (GPS), the X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle, and the worldwide Air Force Satellite Control Network supporting 185 satellites.

<b>Date Established</b>	1985
<b>Land Area</b>	3,840 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	9,670

#### U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA)

The Air Force Academy is both a military organization and a university. Its core mission as an institution of higher learning is to lead cadet military training and Airmanship education for 4,400 cadets each year who will become officers in the U.S. Air Force.

<b>Date Established</b>	1954
<b>Land Area</b>	18,500 acres
<b>Total Population</b>	25,000



### Military Installations

- Installation
- 2-Mile Notification Zone

## Military Plans and Studies

A variety of plans and studies have been undertaken by both the military and the local community to support cooperative planning efforts.

### Colorado Springs Regional Joint Land Use Study (2018)

The Colorado Springs Regional Joint Land Use Study (or JLUS) is a community driven, cooperative, strategic plan for the five military installations located within El Paso County. The geographic scope of this effort was a four-county region, including El Paso County, Pueblo County, Fremont County, and Teller County. The study considers how the region can plan for a future that ensures successful growth, economic health, and continued military operations throughout the region.

Regional challenges identified in the JLUS relevant to El Paso County include:

- Intergovernmental coordination;
- Land use regulations;
- Safety zones;
- Vertical obstructions;
- Transportation;
- Utility infrastructure;
- Stormwater; and
- Water supply.

**Note:** The items relevant to the El Paso County government listed above do not reflect the comprehensive set of compatibility challenges facing military installations throughout the region. Reference the JLUS document for more information regarding issues of interest to other state and local agencies.

### Front Range Regional Encroachment Management Action Plan (2013)

The Front Range Regional Encroachment Management Action Plan (REMAP) was developed to assist military installations along throughout Colorado to prevent or reduce regional compatibility challenges that impact the installations' missions and the community's quality of life in a variety of ways.

Regional challenges identified in the Front Range REMAP specifically relevant to El Paso County include:

- Intergovernmental coordination;
- Regional water availability;
- Lack of consistent stormwater management;
- Land use compatibility and planning coordination; and
- Increased wildland fire risks.

### Installation Complex Encroachment Management Action Plans (2012-2017)

Installation Complex Encroachment Management Action Plans (ICEMAP) are designed to assist individual Air Force Installations to develop a comprehensive plan to manage encroachment and compatibility challenges, and their impacts on the installation's operations. ICEMAPs for the Air Force installations within El Paso County were completed for USAFA in 2012, and Peterson AFB, Schriever AFB, and Cheyenne Mountain AFS in 2017. ICEMAPs, primarily intended for internal use, address a similar set of compatible use challenges as addressed in the JLUS and REMAP documents, including compatible development, water supply, stormwater infrastructure, and utility infrastructure.

### Installation Development Plans and Area Development Plans (various, ongoing)

Installation Development Plans (IDP) and Area Development Plans (ADP) are the primary planning documents for military installations. IDPs are the long-range, comprehensive plans for military installations and guide all future programming decisions. As a rough equivalent to a community comprehensive or master plan (such as *Your El Paso Master Plan*), IDPs guide the development of land, facilities, and infrastructure using a 20-year time horizon. ADPs focus on planning at the district or neighborhood scale at a greater level of detail and inform IDPs.

Although IDPs and ADPs do not address compatible use topics to the same extent as JLUS, REMAP, or the ICEMAPs, they inform functional topics relating to El Paso County interests around transportation access, utility development, and facility siting.

### USAFA Air Installations Compatible Use Zones Study (2019)

The U.S. Air Force Academy Air Installations Compatible Use Zones Study (AICUZ) focuses on the flying missions at the main Academy airfield and Bullseye Auxiliary Airfield, located in southeastern El Paso County. It is intended to promote public health, safety, and general welfare in areas surrounding the Academy's real property while seeking to guide development compatible with the defense flying mission. The AICUZ program recommends that noise zones, clear zones, accident potential zones, and flight clearance requirements associated with military airfield operations be incorporated into community planning programs.

## Key Findings Summary for Military Base Compatibility

Key findings are those topics and subtopics that arose during the first phase of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. The topics result from the public input received from citizen participation, guidance from the El Paso County Master Plan Advisory Committee, and other professional insight based on present conditions and past studies, plans, and reports. The key findings are objective statements founded on thorough research and investigation.

### General Conditions

#### *Regional Coordination and State Law*

- Colorado state law requires local governments to notify military installations of development applications taking place near them, as per Colorado House of Representatives Bill HB 10-1205.
- Colorado HB 17-1054 enables intergovernmental support agreements to be established between the Department of Defense, the state, and local entities.
- Agreements between El Paso County and local military installations have been put in place to address various shared interests such as emergency response and transportation.
- Colorado Revised Statutes CRS 43-1-1103 (5) (b.5) requires state transportation plans to be developed in coordination with federal military installations.
- In addition to state requirements, El Paso County is working to proactively engage local military installations formally and informally through its planning processes, including at the pre-application stage of development when possible.

### Natural Resource Management

- Stormwater management and developing adequate stormwater infrastructure have been ongoing areas of concern for military installations throughout the region.
- New development throughout the County has the potential to exacerbate stormwater runoff, negatively affecting natural and man-made systems in place both on and off military installations.
- Fire departments throughout the region, including from military installations and El Paso County, have established coordination agreements and integrated communication networks to jointly address major wildfire events and to work with media outlets to communicate with the general public.

### Transportation

Transportation interests between El Paso County and local military installations intersect in many locations, including I-25, Highway 115, Highway 94, Highway 24, and other local County roads.

#### *Fort Carson*

- Fort Carson maintains numerous gates along major thoroughfares within El Paso County.
- Planned CDOT improvements along Highway 115 along the western boundary of Fort Carson will improve safety and increase capacity for vehicles.
- As I-25 continues to expand, traffic management systems will help to support peak traffic for Fort Carson-related traffic along South Academy Boulevard, McGrath Avenue, and Santa Fe Avenue.

#### *Peterson AFB*

- Transportation planning and coordination near the Peterson AFB north gate and the Peterson Blvd/Highway 24 intersection in Cimarron Hills is an important priority for the base.
- Due to the close working relationship between Peterson AFB and Schriever AFB, proposed improvements to Highway 94 are also a high priority.

#### *Cheyenne Mountain AFS*

- Highway 115 serves as the major thoroughfare connecting to NORAD Road and maintaining a high level of service along Highway 115 is a key priority for the base.
- A 105-acre undeveloped parcel exists within the County along NORAD Road, and proposed changes to the transportation network or land use on this property could impact AFS transportation or base operations.

#### *Schriever AFB*

- Schriever AFB is the only military installation in the region surrounded solely by unincorporated El Paso County lands.
- Due to its eastward location, its workforce is heavily reliant on the County's major thoroughfares to get to and from the base.
- Highway 94 serves as the key conduit between the City of Colorado Springs, and Schriever AFB and requires significant investment to improve the safety and efficiency for the approximately 7,000 personnel, many of whom to commute to and from Schriever along this route.
- Multiple access roads to Schriever AFB also fall within El Paso County jurisdiction, including Curtis, Irwin, Bradley, and Enoch Roads and maintaining these County roadways is a key priority for Schriever AFB to ensure that alternative routes to and from the base remain safe and efficient.

#### *USAFA*

- Transportation planning near the Air Force Academy's north and south gates are essential to ensure that infrastructure is adequate to meet the demands of workforce and visitors coming to and from the Academy.
- Coordinated planning along I-25, Powers Boulevard, Northgate Boulevard and Academy Boulevard play a key role in facilitating the high traffic volumes around sporting events, graduation ceremonies, or other large gatherings.
- Interagency coordination is required in planning and implementing improvements along many of these major thoroughfares and at intersections near the Academy.
- The County has the ability to influence the overall transportation network near the Academy north gate with ongoing development of the True North Commons, Powers Interchange, and the Struthers Road/Northgate Boulevard intersection.

### Compatible Use (Air Operations)

The air traffic within El Paso County (and along the entire Front Range) is highly congested due to high levels of activity generated by both civilian and military activities within a mountainous, physically constrained environment.

#### Peterson AFB

- Renewable energy development, such as proposed wind or solar projects within the County, has the potential to interfere with flying operations of the 302nd airlift wing.

#### USAFA

- The USAF Academy Airfield supports the university's airman-ship programs (powered flight, unpowered flight, and parachuting) in service of its primary cadet training mission.
- Most of the formally designated noise and safety zones associated with the airfield do not extend beyond the boundaries of the Academy, with the exception of the eastern Clear Zone, Accident Potential Zone 1, and Accident Potential Zone 2 which reach County lands along the western boundary (just north of the Briargate I-25 exit).
- Incompatible development on County lands in the immediate vicinity of USAFA could be minimized by limiting the intensification of current land uses, most of which are low-density residential or agricultural.

- Wind turbines, which provide renewable energy to the region, have functionally eliminated the use of two of the Academy's formally designated training areas in eastern El Paso County. Other tall structures, such as cellular or wireless towers, could also create vertical obstructions to flying operations.
- The Bullseye Auxiliary Airstrip, a 3500-ft runway pavement located south of Sanborn Road approximately 5 miles southeast of Ellicott (32 miles southeast of the Academy) supports practice landings, takeoffs, and touch-and-goes. Establishing similar airport overlay standards already put in place by El Paso County for the Colorado Springs Regional Airport could support air operations at Bullseye.

### Compatible Use (Ground Operations)

#### Fort Carson

- Fort Carson has acquired numerous property interests around its perimeter (including fee simple and easement purchases) through the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. This ongoing effort has reduced incompatible development within Fort Carson's two-mile buffer zone.
- Minimizing development south of Rock Creek Canyon Road (along Highway 115) and Mesa Ridge Parkway (along I-25), as well as along Fort Carson's southern boundary, could help to limit the impacts from noise, smoke, dust, and vibration generated by various training operations.

#### Peterson AFB

- In addition to development within the two-mile buffer area around Peterson AFB, any proposed changes to land uses between the eastern boundary of Peterson AFB and the western edge of Schriever AFB could impact ground operation.
- Interruptions to radio frequency transmissions between the two bases could result from specific structures (particularly telecommunications infrastructure), but also through new development in general, which can increase the amount of radio frequency "noise" levels and generally degrade communications capabilities between Peterson AFB and Schriever AFB.

#### Cheyenne Mountain AFS

- Cheyenne Mountain AFS communication systems are primarily underground, however, proposed telecommunications facilities within the base's two-mile notification zone could impact AFS and its ability to protect its interests from spectrum interference in the region.

#### Schriever AFB

- Ground-based instrumentation at Schriever AFB requires unobstructed lines of sight to communicate with various space systems (e.g. satellites) to carry out missions.
- Tall building development within Schriever's two-mile notification zone could jeopardize critical look angles are for ongoing operations.
- In addition, generally limiting radio frequency "noise" by preserving the rural, agricultural character in the general vicinity of Schriever AFB (even beyond its two-mile buffer zone) are key in supporting its mission.

#### USAF Academy

- Jack's Valley, an area near the Academy's northern boundary and adjacent to County lands, is heavily utilized by Academy personnel, cadets, and civilian law enforcement agencies for a variety of training purposes
- The land uses immediately adjacent to the Academy are currently compatible with the noise, smoke, dust, and vibrations generated within this area
- Preserving the rural, agricultural character of this area could help to ensure these missions are able to continue without negative impacts to the community

# CHAPTER 6 RECREATION AND TOURISM

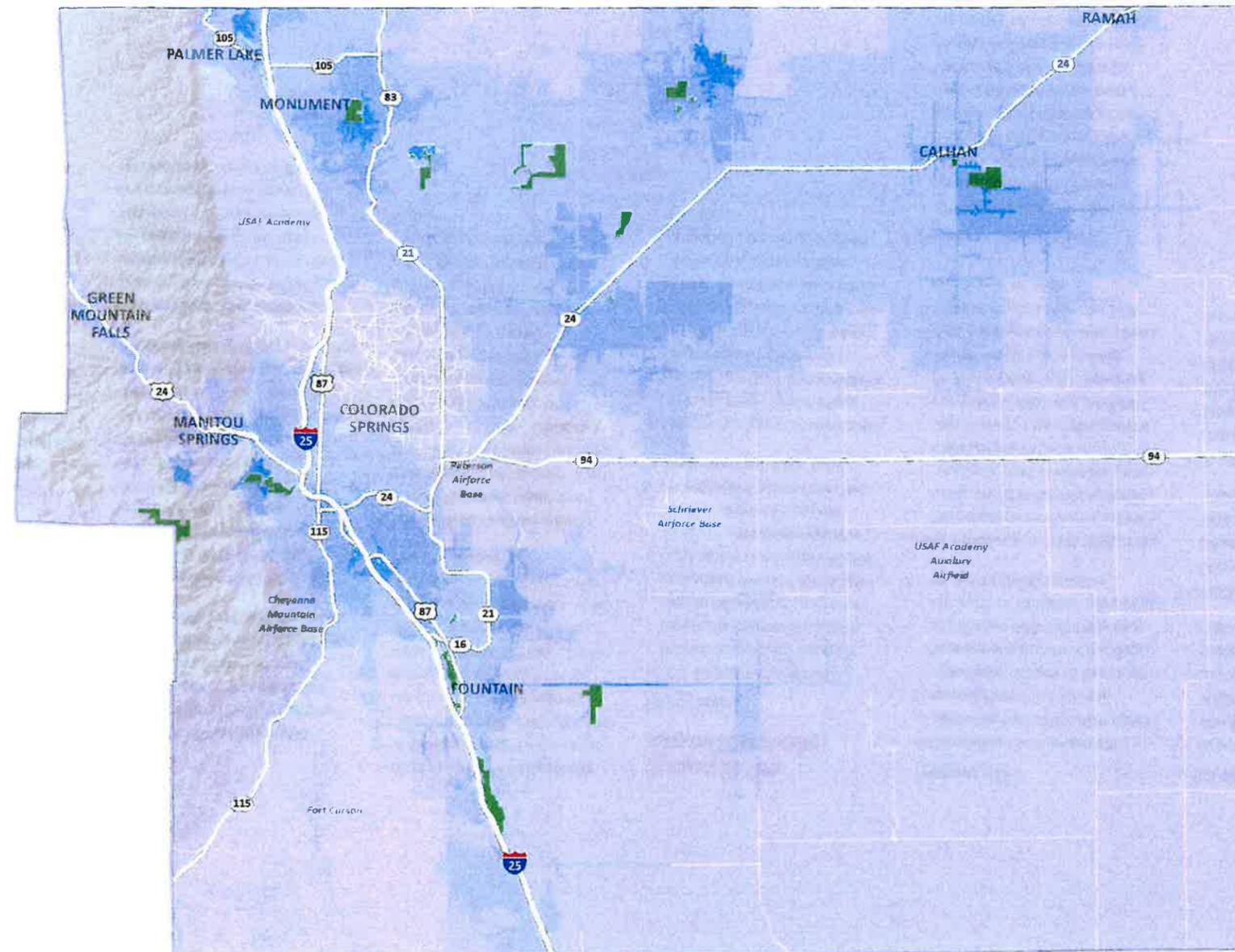
Access to recreation and open space is a fundamental quality-of-life indicator for a community's residents, providing opportunities for exercise and social interaction. Recreational opportunities can also play an integral role in the tourism industry, and this is certainly the case in El Paso County. Tourism is an important economic driver, drawing visitors to the area to enjoy destinations and also patronize local businesses. These two sectors are closely interwoven with expansive parks systems, nationally renowned natural features like Pikes Peak, and large-scale tourist destinations such as the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. Due to its crucial nature to the State of Colorado and to the County, tourism is a required section to be covered in *Your El Paso Master Plan*, as per Colorado Revised Statutes (§ 30-28-106 and § 31-23-206).

## Parks and Recreation

Parks, open space, and recreation amenities include both passive and active recreational spaces, as well as environmental features which can contribute to natural beauty and sense of place. El Paso County's parks system, open spaces, and recreational opportunities were inventoried and reviewed to identify key issues which should be addressed in the Master Plan.

### Parks and Recreation

- County Parks and Recreation Areas
- Other Parks and Open Space
- 0-5 Minute Drive to County Park
- 5-10 Minute Drive to County Park
- 10-15 Minute Drive to County Park



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FOR STAFF REVIEW

### El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013)

The 2013 El Paso County Parks Master Plan was created to strategize and address the needs of parks, trails, open space, and recreation and cultural services throughout the County. The Plan intends to provide a sustainable approach to the allocation of resources for the next five to 10 years and outlines the existing conditions and future needs from the vantage point of various stakeholders. The recommendations provided by the Plan are categorized by the following:

- Overall system mission/role;
- Regional parks and recreation areas;
- Regional trails;
- Open space;
- Recreation and cultural services programs and facilities;
- Management and administration;
- Community awareness; and
- Implementation and funding.

### El Paso County Parks and Recreation

The Parks Division of the County's Community Services Department manages and operates over 8,000 acres of parkland at 19 parks facilities including County parks, nature centers, and open space, and an additional 1,000+ miles of regional trails. Parks in the County are classified as either regional or neighborhood parks, depending on their service area (regional vs. local). Two nature centers and a number of open spaces are also included in the County's recreation system.

#### Parks and Recreation System Service Area Analysis

The majority of the County's parks and recreation facilities are on the west and north side of the County, with the exception of Paint Mines Park and the County Fairgrounds in the east. These facilities range greatly in size from one acre up to 1,100 acres. Being a part of a regional system, these parks and other open space/natural areas are intended to serve the entire County population.

Utilizing the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) classification and standards system, a 10- and 15-minute drive time is a standard used to define the service area for parks facilities. The same standard has been applied even though some parks are significantly smaller in size than others and travelers within El Paso County may be more willing to go longer distances to get to recreational opportunities than in other parts of the nation. The service area boundaries are analyzed in comparison to the census tract populations for the 129 tracts within El Paso County.

The service area analysis concludes that 61 percent of the County's population is within a 15-minute drive of a County parks facility. A majority of the remaining 39 percent of the County population is within municipal boundaries, mostly in Colorado Springs, which are served by their own municipal parks systems. When these municipal parks are included in the analysis, 93 percent of the total County population is served by a park facility, natural area, or open space.

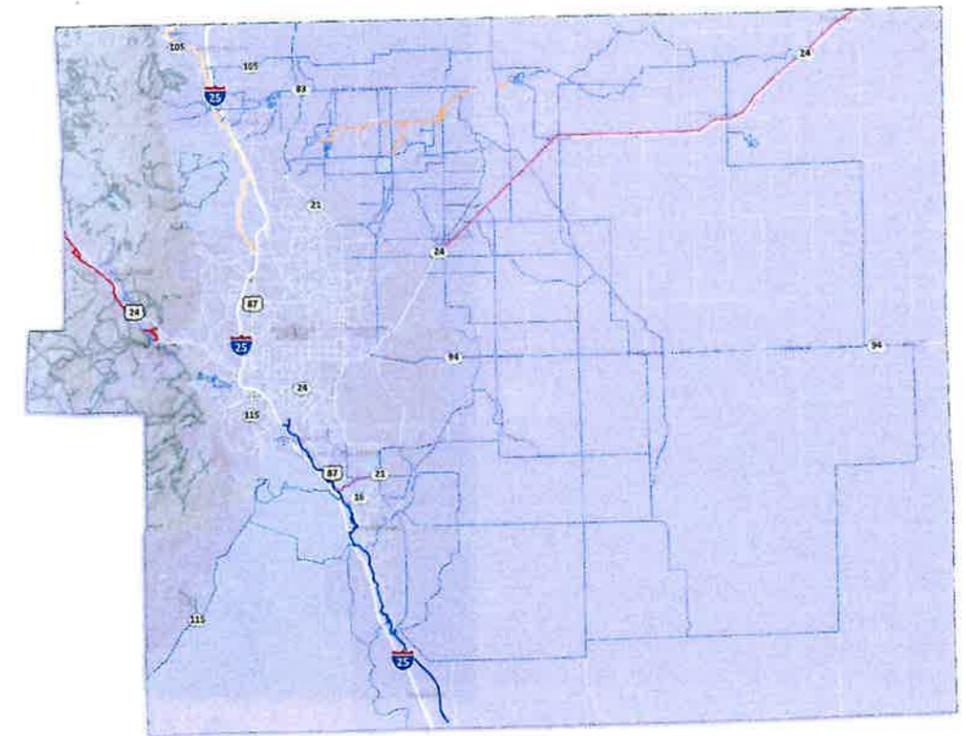
A key issue highlighted by this analysis is the lack of facilities in the south and east sides of El Paso County, and along the western edges. However, those on the western edge of the County are served by Forest Preserve lands, which can be publicly accessible. Similarly, the southeastern portion of the County is rural and has far fewer residents.

#### Regional Trails

The Parks Division manages over 1,000 miles of regional trails throughout the County connecting all but three of the County parks, open spaces, or nature centers. One of those, Peyton Pines, is not open to the public. More than a third of the trails are paved with either crushed limestone, asphalt, or concrete, while the remainder are unpaved, and typically surfaced by native soils.

The six distinct trails that constitute El Paso County's regional trail system are:

- Crews Gulch Regional Trail;
- Fountain Creek Regional Trail;
- New Santa Fe Regional Trail;
- Rock Island Regional Trail;
- Palmer Divide Regional Trail; and
- Ute Pass Regional Trail.



#### Trails

- Crews Gulch Regional Trail
- Fountain Creek Regional Trail
- New Santa Fe Regional Trail
- Rock Island Regional Trail
- Palmer Divide Regional Trail
- Ute Pass Regional Trail
- Other County Trails
- Pikes Peak Area Trails

### State and Federal Parks

The Cheyenne Mountain State Park is the sole park owned and operated by Colorado Parks and Wildlife in El Paso County. The park offers 2,100 acres of camping, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and a myriad of other outdoor recreational options. It also includes several conference, pavilion, and amphitheater facilities for public and private use. The USDA Forest Service manages the Pikes Peak National Forest on the northwestern edge of the County.

### Colorado Springs Park System Master Plan (2014)

This 2014 Master Plan provides direction for the future of the City of Colorado Springs' parks and recreation system. The recommendations are intended to create a balanced parks and recreation system with interconnected trails, a complete open-space network, and multipurpose recreational facilities. This not only includes the management and maintenance of existing and future facilities but also their associated fiscal constraints. The Plan notes the significant role El Paso County's parks and recreation system plays in the quality-of-life of city residents and the importance of cooperation and coordination of the two agencies. Connecting to County trails and partnering on symbiotic projects, such as disc golf courses, are examples of recommendations relating to County facilities.

### Colorado Parks and Wildlife Strategic Plan (2015)

The Strategic Plan was created as a part of the 2015 "Colorado the Beautiful" Initiative to expand the trails system across the State and connect every Coloradan to nature while stewarding conservation and preservation. In support of this mission, the Plan includes six goals, each accompanied by at least three objectives, that are as follows:

- Provide statewide leadership for trail recreation in Colorado.
- Facilitate trail development and management across Colorado.
- Serve as the advocate for trails in Colorado.
- Emphasize responsible stewardship for all phases of trail development and use.
- Advance ethical use and cooperation among trail recreationists.
- Seek financial sustainability for the trails program.

Each objective includes a series of specific actions some of which are directed toward cooperation with all of the counties in the State, namely identifying gaps in the County trail systems.

### PlanCOS: Majestic Landscapes Framework (2019)

Similar to the Colorado Springs Park System Master Plan, the Majestic Landscapes Chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan update, PlanCOS, focuses on the importance of parks and recreation in Colorado Springs. Again, strategies related to the City's parks system include coordination with regional parks and recreation management organizations, including El Paso County.



### State and Federal Parks

- Cheyenne Mountain State Park
- Pike National Forest

## Tourism

Tourism can account for a large share of a community's economy, and this is true for El Paso County, which is a hub for outdoor recreation not only in the state, but also for the country. Millions of people visit El Paso County each year and according to Visit Colorado Springs, the tourism and promotional nonprofit for the Pikes Peak Region, last year visitors spent about \$2.25 billion dollars in the region. Tourism also supports the local economy through job creation, as the third largest employment industry in the Pikes Peak Region, providing over 20,000 jobs.

### Regional Tourism Act

The Regional Tourism Act (RTA) establishes a program that gives local governments the opportunity to apply with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) for approval of a large scale Regional Tourism Project that is of an extraordinary and unique nature, is anticipated to result in a substantial increase in out-of-state tourism, and that generates a significant portion of the sales tax revenue through tourist transactions.

The RTA promotes diversification of the state's economic base by providing a financing mechanism for these projects, including, but not limited to, museums, stadiums, arenas, major sports facilities, performing arts theaters, theme or amusement parks, conference centers or resort hotels or other similar venues that draw a significant number of regional, national or international patrons.

In December 2013, the City of Colorado Springs was awarded an estimated \$120.5 million in state sales tax increment by the Colorado State Economic Development Commission. Four of these "City for Champions" projects are currently being developed including:

- Colorado Sports and Events Center;
- United States Olympic Museum;
- Sports Medicine and Performance Center at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs; and
- Gateway Visitor Center for the U.S. United States Air Force Academy.

The Gateway Visitor Center project is in unincorporated El Paso County near Gleneagle.

### Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region Destination Master Plan (2018)

This regional plan aspires to make Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region the leading U.S. destination for experiential travel, with five strategic goals:

- Provide unique experiences that reflect the authentic nature of the region, helping to extend the length of stay.
- Deliver priority infrastructure that serves current needs and anticipates future demand.
- Improve connectivity for trails, roads, transportation systems, and online communication.
- Strengthen the destination brand to ensure the region is top of mind with potential visitors in a positive way.
- Enhance regional collaboration through stronger partnerships and cooperation.

The plan, partly informed by community outreach conducted by the City of Colorado Springs, builds upon recreational opportunities already offered in the region, including its open spaces and U.S. Olympic facilities.

### Attractions

Within the County there are dozens of local and regional attractions that bring visitors from around the United States. Many are concentrated on the western side of the County, near denser urban areas or in the mountains. A significant amount is related to sports and recreation such as the Olympic Training Center and Pikes Peak. Outdoor recreational opportunities are the largest attractions for El Paso County visitors with hundreds of trail miles for biking, walking, and even horseback riding or camping and hiking the entire Colorado Front Range, including the Garden of the Gods. Other key attractions are related to dining, area landmarks, museums and education, and history.

### Historic Sites

Historic areas of El Paso County are important local places that also draw visitors. As an important part of the American Frontier, Colorado and El Paso County, are home to critical parts of the country's history during westward expansion. The County recognizes the role its historic areas play in both the daily life of its residents, and the annual appeal they have for tourists with nearly 300 locally designated historic places. These sites range from homesteads and school houses, to natural springs, trading posts, and historic areas of commerce.

## Recreation and Tourism

### ● District

Old Colorado City Historic District

### ● Food & Drink

Ivywild School  
Phantom Canyon Brewing Company

### ● Landmark

United States Airforce Academy  
Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site  
Glen Eyrie Castle  
Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun  
Starr Kempf's Kinetic Sculptures  
Evergreen Cemetery  
St. Mary's Cathedral

### ● Outdoor Recreation

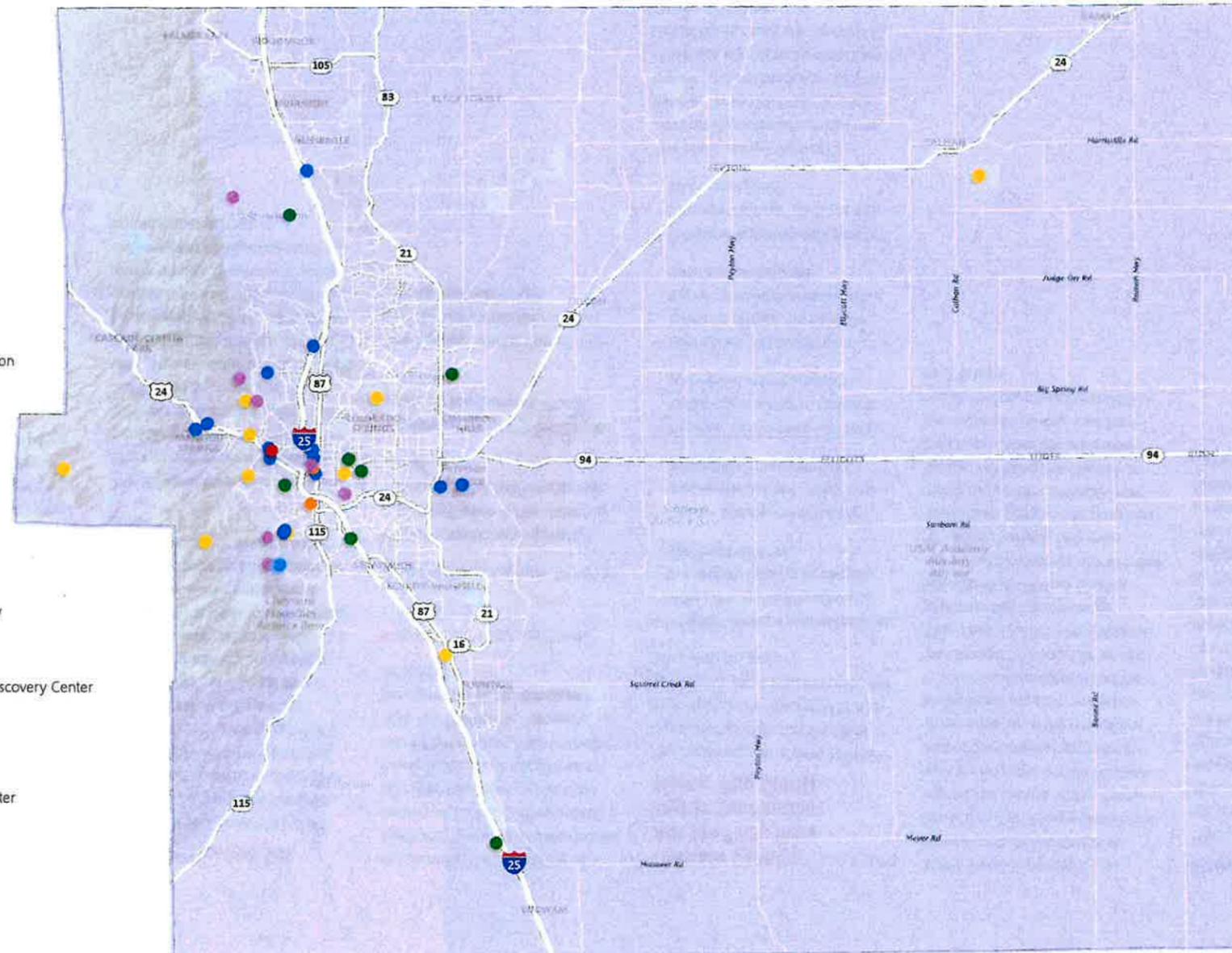
Garden of the Gods  
Bear Creek Nature Center  
Fountain Creek Nature Center  
The Broadmoor Soaring Adventure  
Manitou Springs Adventures  
Pikes Peak  
Cheyenne Mountain Zoo  
Seven Bridges Trail  
Memorial Park  
Palmer Park  
Paint Mines Interpretive Park

### ● Museum

National Museum of World War II Aviation  
Penrose Heritage Museum  
Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum  
Peterson Air & Space Museum  
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center  
Western Museum of Mining & Industry  
Miramont Castle  
American Numismatic Association  
Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame  
Manitou Cliff Dwellings  
The Michael Garman Museum & Gallery  
Ghost Town Museum  
World Figure Skating Museum  
Space Foundation Headquarters and Discovery Center  
McAllister House Museum

### ● Sports & Events

U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Center  
Falcon Stadium  
Norris Penrose Event Center  
Pikes Peak International Raceway  
Stargazers Theatre & Event Center  
World Arena and Ice Hall  
Security Service Field



## Key Findings Summary for Recreation and Tourism

Key findings are those topics and subtopics that arose during the first phase of *Your El Paso Master Plan*. The topics result from the public input received from citizen participation, guidance from the El Paso County Master Plan Advisory Committee, and other professional insight based on present conditions and past studies, plans, and reports. The key findings are objective statements founded on thorough research and investigation.

### Parks and Recreation

#### Provision of Quality Facilities

- Many residents credit parks and recreational facilities as chief strengths or assets for El Paso County.
- Outdoor recreational opportunities are in high demand in El Paso County, due to its setting and natural features, however indoor recreation options are also a priority for some County residents.
- There is local demand for the provision of quality parks and recreational facilities, including nature centers and sports complexes for organized sporting events.

- El Paso County has a unique demand for preserving and expanding equestrian trails.

- The eastern half of the County, while significantly smaller in population than the central area, has a need for additional parks facilities.

- Advocates for parks, trails, and open spaces in El Paso County feel that golf courses or areas for stormwater retention do not serve as public recreation options and therefore should not count towards satisfying recreational space requirements in planned developments.

- Funding is limited and maintaining the existing inventory of parks and trail facilities is challenging. The desired expansion of the parks and trails network including future development of new parks, trails, and open space will place further stress on limited resources and is an important topic to address moving forward.

#### Connectivity

- There is a perceived lack of safety and connectivity between County parks and open spaces. Some residents feel that these amenities should be better connected by further expanding the trail system.
- Most County parks and open spaces lack public transit access.
- There is local demand for the expansion and increased connection of the County's trail network, and bike facilities in general.

#### County Character and Preservation

- Preservation of scenic vistas and open spaces is an important consideration for future development in the County.
- Some residents feel that rural or undeveloped land in El Paso County should be preserved for open space or parks, and not for development or housing.
- The County can regulate the allocation of open space, and amount of open space and recreational areas provided, in new developments.
- Nature centers, and parks and recreational offerings provide opportunities to promote education about nature and the local environment.

### Tourism

#### Enhancing Tourism Options

- The County can explore initiatives targeted at enhancing tourism opportunities specifically within unincorporated areas and attracting tourism spending and employment offerings to those areas.
- Cultural opportunities for tourism destinations in El Paso County can relate to the history, scenic setting, and relationship to the Front Range.
- Some residents cited a lack of hotels in El Paso County.
- The Regional Tourism Act may hold opportunities for adding to large-scale visitor attraction in the County, building on the City for Champions projects, to promote additional local and regional tourism development.

# CHAPTER 7 COMMUNITY HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY

The overall health of a community can be centered on several inter-related factors. In El Paso County, the physical, social, and economic environment all have significant impacts on individual health behaviors and outcomes. Healthy outcomes for El Paso County residents can create vibrant local health, cultural, and economic outcomes for the community. The conversation on community health extends to the built environment, since healthy places contribute to healthier lifestyles and better overall community health.

An additional and related topic is the natural environment, which refers to the health of El Paso County's natural systems. The sustainability of the environment, its natural resources, open spaces, water quality, and habitat for wildlife, are all important considerations for *Your El Paso Master Plan*. The actions and decisions that are made today will influence the ecological setting and living conditions in El Paso County for generations to come.

## Community Health

An assessment of community health in El Paso County is based on past plans and health indicators collected by El Paso County Public Health. According to the 2017 County Health Rankings, El Paso County ranks 29 out of 58 ranked counties in Colorado in health outcomes and 35 in health behaviors, which include adult obesity, smoking inactivity, excessive drinking, and the food environment. Public Health reports describe the state of community health currently, and the vision for a healthier El Paso County in the future.

## El Paso County Health Indicators Report (2017)

El Paso County Public Health issues reports containing information regarding the health of El Paso County residents. The purpose of such reporting is to identify local health trends and concerns. Public Health issued the most recent report in December 2017, in which they verified and analyzed population-based health data.

A short summary of a few indicators follows; however, the report issues extensive findings for the following 10 community health indicators:

- Life Expectancy;
- Clean Air and Clean Water;
- Food Safety;
- Healthy Eating and Active Living;
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse;
- Oral Health;
- Tobacco Use;
- Unintentional Injury;
- Unsafe Sexual Practices and Teen Pregnancy; and
- Vaccine-Preventable Infectious Diseases.

## Life Expectancy

- Life expectancy in El Paso County varies by gender, with women living an average of 81.74 years, while men live an average of 77.85 years, however life expectancy rates also vary across the County region.
- There is a 16.1-year difference in life expectancy across County census tracts.
- Life expectancy is as low as 69.3 years in some areas and as high as 85.4 years in others.
- The leading causes of death in El Paso County are cancer, heart disease, and unintentional injury.

## Healthy Eating and Active Living

- A healthy diet and regular physical activity are essential to good health.
- When calories from food exceed physical activity, a person is likely to become overweight or obese and experience an increased risk of poor health outcomes, such as type 2 diabetes; high blood pressure; certain cancers; heart disease, heart attack or stroke.
- There are many behavioral, environmental, and societal factors that can be altered to reduce the risk of becoming overweight or obese.
- Colorado ranks as one of the leanest states in terms of weight indicators, however one out of every two adults in El Paso County is either overweight or obese, and one out of every five is obese.
- Obesity rates in El Paso County rose from 20.5 percent in 2010 to 23.6 percent in 2016, causing El Paso to climb above average when compared to all other counties in Colorado.

## Mental Health

- Mental health is an integral component of health and fundamental to human ability to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living, and enjoy life.
- El Paso County is consistent with the overall Colorado mental illness rates.
- Colorado has slightly higher percentages of adults who experience serious mental illness, any mental illness, and had serious thoughts of suicide when compared to the national average, with adults aged 18 to 25 consistently having higher rates of occurrence.

### Community Health Improvement Plan (2018)

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was created to address public health problems based on the described results of the Health Indicators Report. The CHIP defines the vision for the health of the El Paso County through a collaborative process. This vision is to: *increase healthy life expectancy for all in El Paso County by offering opportunities and removing barriers that prevent people from achieving optimal health.*

The plan establishes two key goals to work towards this vision:

- **Goal 1** – Reverse the upward trend of obesity across the lifespan by addressing its root causes.
- **Goal 2** – Decrease the incidence of poor mental health and substance use and misuse.

The plan sets forth solutions to improve healthy eating and active living, and mental health and substance use rates in El Paso County, in an approach meant to achieve health equity for all El Paso County residents.

The plan lists evidence-informed strategies and practices to consider for improving healthy eating and active living, including:

- Increasing access to safe parks, sidewalks, and trails;
- Reducing household food insecurity;
- Increasing access to a variety of healthy food encouraged by USDA Dietary Guidelines;
- Reducing barriers to healthy food options with incentive programs;
- Increasing the number of youths that get 150 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week;
- Partnering with school districts to provide out-of-school physical activity programs; and
- Offering tax incentives for building a healthy grocery store in high-need neighborhoods.

The specific strategies to address mental health and substance use include:

- Reducing stigma for behavioral health conditions;
- Increasing community-based mental health education and training;
- Increasing programming within school-based settings;
- Expanding clinical screenings, community-based screenings, referrals to treatment, and adoption of initiatives;
- Developing standardized depression screening protocols for health care providers;
- Requiring service agencies to provide Mental Health First Aid training to all current and new staff;
- Expanding programming for youth, older adults and cross-generational populations; and
- Increasing social connectedness.

El Paso County Public Health can use scorecards to monitor, track, and report progress on these important health goals and measures.

### A Healthy Built Environment

The built environment refers to the places that we live, work, learn, and play. Our built environment directly influences activity in El Paso County and the overall health and well-being of the community. Access to healthy food, health care options, social services, and an equitable approach to access to these, are other important considerations related to the County's quality of life, which are amplified and aided in a healthy setting.

### Land Use Planning and Sustainable Community Design Checklist

The Environmental Health Division of El Paso County Public Health put together a comprehensive checklist that provides a method to ensure long-term protection of public health related to development and environmental factors. The checklist addresses topics that El Paso County can regulate and the many public health issues that can occur due to development of the built environment.

The checklist includes a process of review for the following topics within the context of development in the County:

- **Water Quality** – examine water sources; floodplain and aquifer impacts; hazardous wastes.
- **Water Quantity** – examine water supply; water rights; conservation measures.
- **Wastewater** – examine proposed wastewater treatment; soils; site conditions.
- **Zoonosis** – examine risks of bug-borne disease transmission (mosquito breeding grounds).

- **Air Quality** – examine risks of air pollutants; dust or vehicle emissions; odors; radiation.
- **Natural and Manmade Hazards** – examine risk of flood or landslide; toxic materials; other potential hazards.
- **Opportunities for Physical Fitness** – examine availability of open spaces or trails for walking and biking; sidewalks; lighting; play spaces for children.
- **Transportation and Injury Prevention** – examine truck safety; safe pedestrian crossings and school routes; bicycle lanes; public transportation; ramps for disabled persons.
- **Health Equity** – examine who is potentially impacted by a project; affected residents' involvement in the planning process; barriers to participation by disabled persons.

## Walking and Biking

The County Parks Division currently operates and maintains over 8,000 acres of parkland at 19 parks facilities, and open space, and an additional 1,000+ miles of regional trails, as discussed in the previous chapter. The trails and parks systems allow El Paso County residents and visitors to experience healthy outdoor activities, such as walking, jogging, hiking, and biking.

### *PPACG Regional Nonmotorized Transportation System Plan*

The Regional Nonmotorized Transportation System Plan is one element of the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) Regional Transportation Plan. The plan's primary focus is to establish a regional bicycle and pedestrian transportation network that encourages more people to safely and comfortably use non-motorized transportation modes throughout the region. The plan identifies 68 improvement corridors of varying length throughout the region, based on criteria that contribute to the regional transportation network including their mobility, network connectivity, livability, and deliverability.

Physical barriers to nonmotorized travel in the region include both manmade features and natural features, however in El Paso County, walking and biking may be limited as a form of travel due to limited east-west connections, a large number of high volume or high speed roads that create barriers between areas, and a lack of road network lighting, which leads to limited visibility.

There is a mix in the quality of sidewalk connectivity and conditions in El Paso County. There are many informal sidewalks throughout the region created by people walking alongside key routes where no formal sidewalks exist. These informal sidewalks indicate a demand for sidewalks in those areas.

The plan comments that downtown locations in the region with well-developed pedestrian infrastructure include Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, and Monument. Cities, towns, or places with downtowns that lack well-developed pedestrian infrastructure include Palmer Lake, Falcon, Fountain, and Green Mountain Falls.

## Food Retail Access

The Public Health Department cites a growing body of research shows that food environments impact community health. The food environment includes grocery stores, convenience stores, full-service restaurants, fast food restaurants, farm stands, community gardens, urban farms, etc. Quantity, location, proximity to residential areas, connection to transportation, and ability to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, among other things, all affect the health and accessibility of the environment in El Paso County.

### *El Paso County Food System Assessment – Phase I Report (2018)*

El Paso County Public Health's first Food System Assessment for El Paso County was completed in 2018. Related to the built environment, it found that food retail access in El Paso County is not oriented around neighborhoods, but rather along arterials and commercial centers. This makes the reliance on a vehicle an additional barrier to accessing healthy food. Areas of higher poverty tend to have a greater ratio of unhealthy to healthy food retail options.

Preliminary recommendations identified include the following:

- Strengthen private property rights to encourage urban agricultural activities.
- Work toward reducing barriers for local food producers who wish to sell local food products.
- Build awareness among residents regarding nutrition, food skills, and the sources of their food.
- Seek ways to improve access to safe, affordable, nutritious food for residents, regardless of their income level or geographic location.
- Assess the effects of urban land use policies and regulations on the viability of food production, processing, distribution, and access.

## Health Care Access

Data from the 2017 Colorado Health Access Survey found that Colorado maintained its historic level of health coverage despite political uncertainty and rising insurance premiums. The state's insurance rate is 93.5 percent, essentially unchanged from the all-time high of 93.3 percent set in 2015. The next Health Access Survey is due this fall. In 2017, 7.5 percent of El Paso County residents did not have any form of public or private health insurance, down from 13 percent in 2010. Sixty percent of residents were insured through an employer-sponsored health plan and 26.6 percent reported insurance coverage through a public plan such as Medicaid or Medicare.

The rate of actively licensed health care professionals per population in El Paso County is slightly higher than the state average. In 2017, there were 34 licensed professionals per 1,000 population in El Paso County, and 33 per 1,000 in Colorado.

## Social Services Access

The El Paso County Department of Human Services (DHS) strives to protect the most vulnerable citizens while providing efficient access to the services provided by local, state, and federal governments. DHS works closely with community organizations to stretch the safety net they provide to reach as many people as possible. The main office is at the Citizens Services Center near downtown Colorado Springs, but nine locations are dispersed throughout the County.

Colorado PEAK is another social service resource provided. It is an online service for Coloradans to screen and apply for medical benefits, food, cash, and early childhood assistance programs. Computers are available at many DHS locations for the public to use for access to Colorado PEAK.

## Equitable Access for all Residents

The U.S., Colorado, and El Paso County are becoming more culturally diverse, and the definitions of race and ethnicity are changing to reflect the ways in which people self-identify their racial or ethnic makeup. As the cultural landscape changes, the survey tools used by government and others must also adapt to capture more complex, often self-ascribed racial and ethnic information in order to more accurately report demographic information.

Access to El Paso County services and facilities may reflect the need to make information available in Spanish or other non-English languages. Support services for those welcomed to the El Paso County community from other countries, non-English speakers, and services for any disadvantaged group are priorities to reach more equitable access for all residents. All people should be valued equally, and inequities are created when barriers prevent individuals and communities from accessing the same opportunities.

## Environmental Sustainability

With the rapid growth in population of Colorado and El Paso County, it is more important than ever to consider conservation and the sustainability of Colorado's environmental and natural resources. Conservation easements, mineral extraction, air quality regulations, water conservation and regulations, wetland protection, threatened and endangered species protection, and proper waste management procedures are topics that influence El Paso County's resources and environment.

## Natural Resources and Land Conservation

Colorado is widely known for its beautiful and well-preserved spaces, and El Paso County is no exception. Residents in El Paso County have expressed that conservation and public access are vital to them.

### Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that allows landowners to restrict the type of development on their property while retaining private ownership of the land. El Paso County initiated a Conservation Easement Program to enhance the County's ability to protect the natural and scenic features abundant in the County. The mission of the program is to preserve scenic viewsheds, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, and historic and cultural sites, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public benefit. Currently, the County holds 32 conservation easements, totaling 2,496.75 acres, and ensures that this land remains in compliance with conservation values. This is accomplished through the protection of prairies, forests, existing ranching operations, and undeveloped natural lands, as well as working cooperatively to develop trail connections and view corridors throughout the County.

### State and Federal Lands

State or federal owned lands account for a large proportion of land in the County and may be administered by a variety of different public entities, such as the U.S. Armed Forces, the USDA Forest Service, Colorado Department of Transportation, or Colorado Parks and Wildlife. State-owned lands account for roughly over 285 square miles in El Paso County, and federal-owned lands account for approximately another 325 square miles (the County spans 2,130 square miles). Apart from active military installations, much of state and federal property in the county is open space or parkland, such as Pikes Peak National Forest.

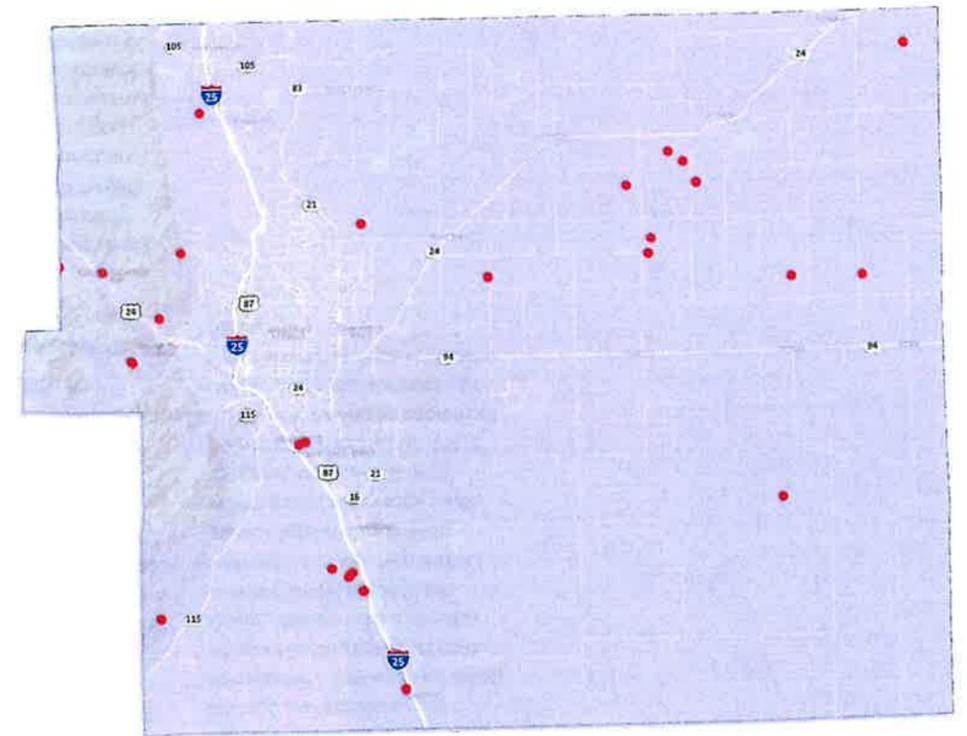
### Mineral Extraction

Mining or mineral extraction has a long history in El Paso County and was one of the main drivers bringing modern settlement to the County. In the mid-19th century, Colorado Springs was a mining center for gold, silver, lead, and coal mines. Today there are still active mines dispersed throughout the County with 27 active state mining permits issued for extraction of natural commodities, including clay, gravel, sand, granite, limestone, and gemstones.

### El Paso County Master Plan for Mineral Extraction 1996

The 1996 El Paso County Master Plan for Mineral Extraction (MPME) was developed to facilitate the continued compliance with the mineral resource protection mandates outlined in the Preservation of Commercial Mineral Deposits Act of 1973 and to provide guidance to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners in evaluating land use proposals involving new or expanded mining and mineral resource processing operations. Policies of this plan are categorized by the following:

- Resource preservation;
- Environmental preservation;
- Resource use; and
- Planning considerations.



### Mineral Extraction

- Active Mine

## Air Quality

According to the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission, Colorado Springs has an air quality index of 44. That is slightly less than the national average of 50, and a lower index than Denver. The Palmer Divide, a ridge that separates the Arkansas River basin from the South Platte basin, tends to block out smog and pollutants from the Denver area. The pollution index in Colorado Springs is 696,890, less than the Colorado average, making it a good area to live for those sensitive to allergy pollutants.

The issuance of an air quality alert is rare in El Paso County, but rapidly changing weather in the El Paso County area can lead to days of poor air quality. This happens often when wind blows in smoke from wildfires west of the County. Wildfires have been more prevalent in the Western United States in the past decades.

## Water Features and Water Quality

Colorado's approach to water quality planning and management has evolved substantially over the last three decades, largely in response to the changing federal and state statutory mandates. At present, these efforts are evolving toward more of a watershed protection focus.

Most water providers in El Paso County provide their customers with Denver Basin groundwater from bedrock aquifers; however, Monument-area water providers have some alluvial wells along Monument Creek, and Fountain-area water providers have alluvial wells along Fountain Creek and in the Widefield Aquifer. Also, Cherokee Metropolitan District obtains most of its supply from alluvial wells in the Upper Black Squirrel Creek (UBSC) Basin, a designated basin.

With respect to water quality, alluvial groundwater is generally more susceptible to contamination from surface sources than Denver Basin groundwater. Typically, a well is drilled, and groundwater is pumped to a well house, where the water can be filtered.

The water is then disinfected, usually with chlorine or a variant, before entering the potable water distribution system for consumption. Groundwater quality issues occurring in El Paso County include:

- Water from Denver Basin aquifers must often be treated for removal of iron, manganese, or both.
- Regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) safe drinking water standards, the primary standards related to health concerns, some Denver Basin wells can develop elevated levels of radionuclides such as radium.
- In recent years, water providers pumping alluvial groundwater from the Widefield Aquifer have either had to use alternate sources or provide added treatment. Emerging contaminants known as perfluorinated compounds (PFCs), have been detected in water from the aquifer due to surface contamination.
- Nitrate often exceeds the primary drinking water standards in agricultural areas, such as across the designated basins, due to extended use of fertilizers.

More renewable water is needed in El Paso County, and its use must be optimized. Ideally, renewable water would be used in times of wet and average precipitation, reserving nonrenewable groundwater supplies for use during drought conditions when surface water flows are low.

### Creeks and Creek Restoration

There are no major streams or rivers in El Paso County, but there are many smaller creeks and creek beds, some of which may run dry from time to time based on precipitation. Those creeks that are south of the Palmer Divide flow into the Arkansas River, and most creeks in El Paso County fall into this category. Those creeks north of the divide flow into the South Platte River.

Creeks in El Paso County include:

- Bear Creek;
- Big Sandy Creek;
- Black Squirrel Creek;
- Boehmer Creek;
- Cascade Creek;
- Cherry Creek;
- Cheyenne Creek;
- Chico Creek;
- Fountain Creek;
- Horse Creek;
- Jimmy Camp Creek;
- Kettle Creek;
- Kiowa Creek;
- Monument Creek;
- Pine Creek;
- Rock Creek;
- Sand Creek;
- Severy Creek;
- Turkey Creek;
- West Bijou Creek; and
- West Kiowa Creek at Elbert.

### Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District

The Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District consists of the counties of El Paso and Pueblo. The district's Board of Directors is authorized to manage, administer, and fund the capital improvements necessary in the Fountain Creek Watershed to:

- Mitigate flooding, erosion and sedimentation;
- Address water quality issues;
- Improve drainage;
- Protect open space; and
- Develop public recreational opportunities including open space.

Flooding can be a concern along County creeks, and the district has initiated restoration projects in the County areas. The Fountain Creek Restoration Project establishes a series of restoration techniques for land conservation, flood control, and protection of fish habitat in the southern region. The Monument Creek Restoration Plan is a response to summer of floods occurring in 2013, coupled with the 2012 Waldo Canyon fire and the 2013 Black Forest fire, and the plan identifies strategies that will mitigate the effects of fire and flood damage in the watershed, to support the health, safety and welfare of the public.

### Natural Riparian Areas and Wetlands

Riparian areas in El Paso County support rare and imperiled plants, animals, and significant plant communities. These can be found adjacent to all creeks in El Paso County. Riparian areas not only provide habitat for birds and mammals, but also help protect aquatic habitat for fish. By providing shade, which keeps water temperatures down, filtering pollutants and sediments out of runoff, and serving as a source of woody debris, riparian areas are critical for the protection of these habitats.

Wetlands are essential biological resources that provide many ecological services. They are integral in recharging groundwater supply, alleviating stress on land from flooding, controlling erosion, and improving water quality, and wetlands are an important habitat for wildlife, including endangered species. Monument Creek, Fountain Creek, Lower Fountain Creek, and Colorado Springs Composite are sub-watersheds located in El Paso County. The Fountain Creek watershed is the largest of these includes 9,336 acres of wetlands.

Four different categories of wetlands are present throughout the watersheds in the Pikes Peak region:

- Peatlands;
- Marshes;
- Wet meadows; and
- Riparian.

Protection of riparian areas and wetlands resources are vital for the health of the County's natural environmental systems.

#### Lakes and Reservoirs

Water bodies such as lakes and reservoirs in El Paso County are mostly small and influenced by manmade grading projects. The protection of lakes and reservoir systems relates to regional water supply, water quality, and habitat preservation.

A list of lakes and reservoirs in El Paso County includes:

- Aspen Lake Reservoir;
- Big Tooth Reservoir;
- Calhan Reservoir;
- Cheyenne Lake;
- Crystal Creek Reservoir;
- Deadmans Lake;
- Highline Reservoir;
- Kettle Lakes;
- Lake Moraine;
- Lower Reservoir;
- Prospect Lake;
- Quail Lake;
- Manitou Reservoir;
- Monument Lake;
- Prospect Lake;
- Rainbow Reservoir;
- Stanley Reservoir;
- Upper Reservoir; and
- Woodmoor Lake.

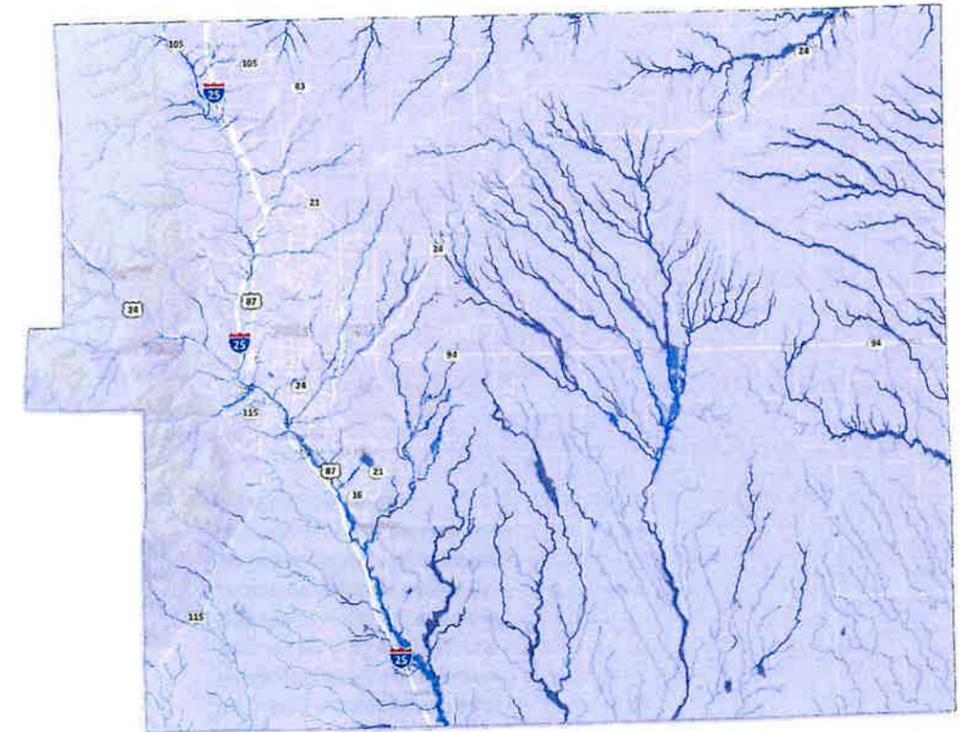
#### Flood Zones

Development encroaching on floodplains has become an increasing problem in El Paso County, altering the landscape and creating infrastructure damage and safety concerns. Floods are expected to increase as development continues within the watershed and the amount of impervious area increases.

Flood zone designations from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are illustrated on the accompanying map. The County's administration of flood plain regulations is administered by the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department with Floodplain Code contained in the Building Code.

#### Definitions of FEMA Flood Zone Designations

Flood Zone	Description
A	Areas subject to a one percent or greater annual chance of flooding in any given year. Because detailed hydraulic analyses have not been performed on these areas, no base flood elevations are shown.
AE	Areas subject to a one percent or greater annual chance of flooding in any given year. Base flood elevations are shown as derived from detailed hydraulic analyses.
AH	Areas subject to a one percent or greater annual chance of shallow flooding in any given year. Flooding is usually in the form of ponding with average depths between one and three feet. Base flood elevations are shown as derived from detailed hydraulic analyses.
AO	Areas subject to a one percent or greater annual chance of shallow flooding in any given year. Flooding is usually in the form of sheet flow with average depths between one and three feet. Average flood depths are shown as derived from detailed hydraulic analyses.
D	Areas of undetermined flood hazard where flooding is possible.
X	Areas of minimal flood hazard from the principal source of flood in the area and determined to be outside the 0.2 percent annual chance floodplain.



#### Flood Zones

- Streams
- A Flood Zone
- AE Flood Zone
- AH Flood Zone
- AO Flood Zone

## Wildlife Protection

Natural resources in El Paso County encompass ecosystems that range from tallgrass prairie to alpine peaks, rugged canyons to sagebrush deserts, and dense forests to open tundra. Within each of these unique ecosystems, wildlife and their habitat integrate with growing human settlement patterns.

### Threatened and Endangered Species

The purpose of the Endangered Species Act, passed by Congress in 1973, is to prevent the extinction of native and foreign animals and plants. The County's Environmental Division monitors activities affecting protected species ensuring the required clearances, permitting, and mitigation of unavoidable impacts.

Federally listed threatened and endangered species in Colorado include:

- Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (Threatened);
- Mexican Spotted Owl (Threatened); and
- Greenback Cutthroat Trout (Threatened).

Federally listed threatened and endangered species candidates in Colorado include:

- Arkansas Darter (Candidate Species); and
- Gunnison's Prairie Dog (Candidate Species).

The state's threatened and endangered species list currently contains 31 threatened and endangered species and 43 species of concern and includes such species as the:

- Kit Fox;
- Townsend's Big-eared Bat;
- American Peregrine Falcon;
- Burrowing Owl; and
- Boreal Toad.

### Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Part of El Paso County's conservation policies and procedures is the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) which was passed in 1918. This act, in conjunction with several international conventions, provided for the international protection of migratory birds. Under the MBTA, it is illegal to hunt, pursue, take, capture, wound, kill, possess, sell, purchase or transport any migratory bird or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird unless granted by a permit issued through the Department of the Interior. Over 1,000 species are protected under the MBTA, including 58 species that are legally hunted as game birds. The MBTA is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Waste Management

The Environmental Division in the El Paso County Community Services Department ensures that county-generated hazardous wastes are properly classified, stored, transported, and disposed of in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations. Fuel storage is provided in bulk storage facilities within the County and meets federal and state regulations. The Environmental Division also implements the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plans at all applicable El Paso County-owned facilities.

El Paso County residents have over 20 companies to choose from when it comes to garbage disposal services. In addition to these private service providers, the El Paso County Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 3255 Akers Drive accepts typical household hazardous waste from El Paso and Teller County residents at no charge. El Paso County also provides a Colorado Household Medication Take-Back Program, where residents can drop off household medications to be disposed of properly.

## Recycling

El Paso County facility at 3255 Akers Drive also offers free recycling services to households within the County unincorporated areas. Cardboard, plastic, paper, aluminum, tin, etc. is all accepted, but registration is required to be able to drop off recyclables. Many of the private garbage disposal companies also provide paid recycling as part of their service.

## Key Findings Summary for Community Health and Sustainability

### Community Health

#### Health Topics

- Overall, El Paso County is relatively healthy community, when compared to the rest of the state and country.
- There is room for improvement in areas such as the incline in obesity, poor mental health and well-being, and substance abuse and misuse.
- Some County residents are concerned with the health impacts of marijuana usage.
- An aging population brings the need for health care providers, health care services, and senior services.
- El Paso County Public Health is providing plans and services and the County can consider continuing support for plans and improved community health services.

### Health and the Built Environment

#### Healthy Development

- El Paso County strives to provide its residents with a healthy built environment through the application of Building Code, Land Development Code, and Board of Health Regulations.
- The County's Land Use Planning and Sustainable Community Design Checklist is a good resource for development review processes in the County.
- Provision of parks and recreation options, and open spaces are resources that can improve overall community health.
- El Paso County can derive community health benefits from a safe and well-connected system of trails, paths, bike lanes, and sidewalks in El Paso County for walking and biking.

#### Food Security

- Based on County's Food System Assessment, the County needs to seek ways to improve access to safe, affordable, nutritious food for residents, regardless of their income level or geographic location.
- The County can assess the effects of land use policies and regulations on the viability of food production, processing, distribution, and access.

#### Health Care, Social Services, and Equity

- Hospitals in El Paso County are located almost exclusively in the central part of the County in or near Colorado Springs.
- The number of uninsured El Paso County residents with no form of public or private health insurance is down dramatically since the adoption of the Affordable Care Act.
- Social service agencies, whether public or nonprofit agencies, can require additional support.
- The County can explore opportunities to make County plans, policies, and access to services more equitable or fairer to all County residents, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin or citizenship status, sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, age, disability, or military status.

### Environmental Sustainability

#### Environment Topics

- El Paso County wants to protect its natural environment while ensuring social justice and economic well-being for all its residents.
- The County can address the following issues to ensure it is doing everything it can for the environmental sustainability of El Paso County: natural resources and land conservation, air quality, water features and water quality, wildlife protection, and waste management, among others.
- Some residents want El Paso County use or expand use of alternative energy sources to coal.
- Preservation and conservation of water resources, natural ecosystems, open spaces, and wildlife habitat are important considerations for the County as it changes, grows, and develops.

# CHAPTER 8 RESILIENCY AND HAZARD MITIGATION

Integrating resiliency planning, hazard mitigation, and risk reduction into *Your El Paso Master Plan* is an approach that considers all future outcomes, both good and bad. The examination of existing conditions related to resiliency and hazard mitigation helps set forward a balanced framework for planning. It informs the necessary actions or methods that can be utilized to reduce and mitigate risks for El Paso County and its residents. This important topic also provides the direction for a key focus of the plan, which is for El Paso County to become a more resilient community as it grows and develops.

## Hazards in El Paso County

Reducing disaster and hazard risks for the people, property, and the environment of El Paso County will depend on the identification of risks to the community. Disaster situations can be unanticipated, so it is crucial that the County be able to effectively deal with such an event when it occurs. The following section provides an overview of the potential hazards within the County.

### Drought

Most of Colorado and El Paso County lie within a semi-arid climate and are thus prone to periods of drought. The State of Colorado published a drought mitigation plan in 2013 with the goal of preparing the state for drought events. When drought conditions occur, it will be vital for the County to have measures in place to reduce water usage.

Such measures that can be implemented include:

- Incentives for developers who use xeric landscaping in new projects;
- Creating interconnections between systems to provide water during times of scarcity;
- Amend land-use policies to allow for drought-tolerant landscaping and xeriscaping; and
- Keeping local drought management plans up to date.

### Wildfires

The County is no stranger to wildfires having experienced the Waldo Canyon Fire and the Black Forest Fire, two of Colorado's most destructive wildfires. As communities expand, it will be necessary for the County to identify areas of high wildfire risk and educate residents and businesses on tools to mitigate a future wildfire affecting their property. The Colorado State Forest Service provides information regarding wildfire risk and mitigation methods to residents. Such methods include proper landscape maintenance around properties and education about evacuation procedures.

### Flash Floods

After any significant rain event, a creek can easily become a raging torrent. Flash flooding can be caused by a rain event far upstream, which can and will flood areas where no rain is occurring. It is in these instances that it can become dangerous. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides maps of where floods are more likely to occur, and these are often used for development and insurance purposes. In El Paso County some of the most catastrophic flooding occurred after the wildfires in 2012 and 2013 had stripped higher sloped areas of vegetation.

### Winter Storms

Most winters El Paso County has at least one severe winter storm; however, intensity of winter storms can vary. While heavy snow is a yearly phenomenon, there are times when the snow and ice can overwhelm snow plowing and ice remediation efforts. The effects of a severe winter storm can include downed powerlines, livestock losses, and unusable transportation infrastructure. In El Paso County, plowing services are provided by Public Works. In the event of severe winter weather, the County will plow roads which are vital to the life and safety of the residents.

### Other Hazards

The Hazard Mitigation Plan highlights additional hazards that, while not as prevalent as the scenarios already listed, should still be recounted as potential hazards for El Paso County:

#### Severe Storms

Severe storms can produce a variety of weather phenomena that can cause damage to property and seriously hurt or kill people. One of the more common storm damages is from hail, and another aspect of severe storms is tornadoes. Colorado ranks 9th in the United States for frequency of tornadoes. While tornadoes could form with any severe storm, they more generally occur in the flatter areas in the eastern part of the County.

#### Avalanche or Landslides

Avalanches or landslides occur when snow or soils become so weighted that they give way and can damage or destroy objects in their path. Avalanches occur mostly in the winter to early spring and usually affects areas that are at the base of the sloped surface. Landslides can occur any time of the year and in areas where soil has been stripped of vegetation by wildfire or development.

#### Earthquakes

Earthquakes mostly occur naturally in areas along fault lines. These areas tend to correspond with mountainous areas within the County, but the effects of the shaking could be felt for hundreds of miles from an epicenter. El Paso County has a history of moderate earthquakes with the most recent occurring around Manitou Springs in late 1995.

#### Hazardous Materials Release

Hazardous materials traverse the County along oil or gas pipelines, highway corridors, and rail routes. Because of the many miles of routes that traverse the County, it is difficult to pinpoint when or where a release may occur.

#### Terrorism

Acts of terrorism are potential risks to the County. Threats may come from abroad or be homegrown.

#### Epidemics or Pandemics

Humans are dealing with a continued threat of widespread disease. Despite advances in medicine there is still the possibility a pandemic could affect the community. The last two decades have seen outbreaks of SARS, swine flu, and the Zika virus. Manmade factors such as bioterrorism also needs to be considered as another way pathogens could be released and spread in the County.

## Disaster Response and Recovery

The Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management and the State of Colorado, and a number of disaster assistance organizations, provide response and recovery planning in the incident of a disaster in El Paso County.

### Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management

The Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management (OEM) provides coordination and support before, during, and after disaster situations that may affect El Paso County. The office is managed jointly by the El Paso County Board of Commissioners and the City of Colorado Springs. OEM's four main tasks are:

- **Readiness** — To anticipate future disasters and potential hazards and provide collaboration at all levels of government.
- **Response** — The Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) serves as an organized hub for operations during an incident.
- **Recovery** — OEM provides support for areas following a disaster, making sure that infrastructure is usable and working with communities to rebuild for the long term.
- **Hazardous Materials** — Part of the responsibility of OEM is to work with facilities using hazardous materials. Working with local stakeholders, they help prepare them and mitigate risk of an incident involving hazardous materials.

OEM also provides a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) booklet for citizens of the County to prepare for disasters and mitigate hazards. The booklet has different areas for people to fill out and prioritize in the event of an incident. It also has checklists so that allow one to understand what items and actions need to be done to best weather a disaster.

### Emergency Operations Plan (2016)

Adopted in September of 2016, the El Paso County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was formed as part of an interconnected system of plans founded upon the National Response Framework, National Disaster Recover Framework, and the National Incident Management System. The plan provides an overview of various operations and departmental agencies for emergency operations, and outlines the purpose, role, and hierarchy for each organization during an incident. The EOP reviews planning assumptions and considerations, concepts of emergency management, risk analysis, and implementation and maintenance. The document also gives directions on how the County will interact and other agencies and the community during an incident.

### Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan (2016)

Colorado's statewide emergency management program is prepared by the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department of Public Safety. The plan is based on the four phases of emergency management:

- **Mitigation** — The effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. For mitigation to be effective, action needs to be taken now, before the next disaster, to reduce human and financial consequences later.
- **Preparedness** — Includes plans or preparations made to save lives and to help response and rescue operations. Evacuation plans and stocking food and water are both examples of preparedness. Preparedness activities take place before an emergency occurs.

- **Response** — Preservation of life, maintenance of public safety and security, health, incident stabilization, property protection, environmental protection, restoration of essential utilities, restoration of essential program functions, and coordination among appropriate stakeholders. Response is measured in days or weeks.
- **Recovery** — Preservation of life, maintenance of public safety and security, health, incident stabilization, property protection, environmental protection, restoration of essential utilities, restoration of essential program functions, and coordination among appropriate stakeholders. Recovery is measured in years.

The purpose of the Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan is to outline the general guidelines on how the Colorado carries out its response and recovery responsibilities.

### Disaster Assistance Organizations

There are various agencies, organizations, and charities that are available to organize efforts to assist citizens of El Paso County during a disaster.

**FEMA** — The Federal Emergency Management Agency is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and is responsible for aiding during and after disasters throughout the U.S. It also helps in preparation for disasters so that response is organized.

**State of Colorado Department of Emergency Management** — This department manages and coordinates various activities during and after disasters affecting the State of Colorado.

**Red Cross** — One of the major assistance organizations in the U.S. and in the State of Colorado, the American Red Cross provide post-assistance to affected communities from house fire to major natural disasters. In addition, they have training and resources for communities so that they can better prepare for various disasters.

**Local Organizations** — Many organizations exist in El Paso County that assist in times of disaster. Charitable or religious organizations often work within communities to house, treat, and assist the populace during a time of disaster.

## Resiliency Planning

Resiliency planning is officially conducted through local and state agencies, although these groups require the participation and engagement of many partner agencies and participants to further their missions and goals. *Your El Paso Master Plan* is an opportunity for all of El Paso County to align with resiliency plans, to ensure that decision-making and development of the County is conducted in ways that support a safe, long-term future for community investments and a high quality of life for all El Paso County residents.

The Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management and the State of Colorado are counterparts that work on detailed planning documents with preventative measures to create a more resilient El Paso County and region.

## El Paso County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2015)

As required by the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, local authorities must have in place proactive, pre-disaster strategies to receive certain federal funds. The 2015 update of the plan was the culmination of planning efforts by communities in El Paso County and their citizen stakeholders. The Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management's guiding principle for the plan is to reduce risks to life safety and property in El Paso County from natural and human-caused hazards, incidents, or events.

The following plan goals and objectives were established in the plan:

- Reduce loss of life and injury.
- Reduce property and economic losses.
- Enhance communication of risks and threats in El Paso County to empower personal preparedness and responsibility.
- Improve collaboration and cooperation throughout El Paso and partnering jurisdictions.
- Incorporate hazard mitigation into future plans and policies.
- Continuity of government services and business operations.

The plan identifies 85 mitigation initiatives designed to reduce or eliminate losses resulting from natural hazards, for implementation by planning partners and individual municipalities. Many of these initiatives are strategies for improving the network of coordination between agencies and the acquiring the data or information required to respond to local disaster situations.

## Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions for Colorado (2017)

Planning for Hazards is a plan supported by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs that enables counties and municipalities to prepare for and mitigate multiple hazards by integrating resilience and hazard mitigation principles into plans, codes, and standards related to land use and the built environment.

El Paso County has land that can be prone to hazard and requires special consideration prior to development or that may limit development potential. People may be drawn to build their homes in attractive places such as dense forests, creek corridors, and hillsides, however these areas have high risk of wildfire, frequent flooding, and rockslides.

A challenge for El Paso County and Colorado's local governments is to plan for appropriate development to occur while also protecting people and property from the impacts of hazards. The simplest way to ensure safer communities is to prohibit building in hazardous areas. However, stopping development altogether in high-risk areas is not always feasible, and planners and local officials must balance the protection of public health and safety with other important goals such as economic development and the provision of affordable workforce housing.

The following are the plan's approaches for local communities as they balance planning for hazards with other important land use goals:

- Prevent or discourage development in hazardous areas.
- Direct future growth to safer areas.
- Protect existing development in hazardous areas.

Solutions or strategies that are used to report hazard mitigation and land use planning are:

- Addressing hazards in plans and policies.
- Strengthening incentives.
- Protecting sensitive areas.
- Improving site development standards.
- Improving buildings and infrastructure.
- Enhancing administration and procedures.

## Colorado Resiliency Framework (2015)

In 2015, the State of Colorado published the Colorado Resiliency Framework. This document highlights the many areas that the state addresses when considering resiliency, provides ways for communities to understand and prepare for the shocks and stresses they may face, and presents goals and strategies to achieve based on the issues presented in the document.

The plan states that resiliency can only be achieved when underlying, chronic challenges and susceptibility to external shocks are both considered and addressed. To identify strategies and actions Colorado can take to foster resiliency, the plan is organized around six core resiliency sectors: Community, Economic, Health and Social, Housing, Infrastructure, and Watersheds and Natural Resources. Each sector represents a fundamental building block that supports the state's overall resiliency.

Development of the framework is just the beginning. Implementation requires leadership to make decisions and empower others to act. A "call to action plan" steps are as follows:

- **Convene** — Bring together a diverse range of stakeholders from state and federal agencies, local communities, the private sector, and nonprofits to collectively identify, coordinate, and implement resiliency activities.
- **Facilitate** — Create opportunities to implement resiliency strategies through education and technical assistance and leveraging of re-sources.
- **Communicate** — Share stories, best practices, and lessons learned and priorities, with a sense of urgency and with an eye to the long term.
- **Empower** — Inspire and enable local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and community members to integrate resiliency into their daily lives and business.

Engagement from the state, local governments, and the community is key to resiliency. Actions will be informed by the understanding of risks and vulnerabilities and how those risks and vulnerabilities would impact and interact with people, property, and infrastructure. Efforts that make existing tools and data more usable, accessible, and understandable will assist the public and policy and decision-makers in taking the right steps.

## Key Findings Summary for Resiliency and Hazard Mitigation

### Assessing the Risks

- While the residents and visitors enjoy the beauty and natural wonders of El Paso County, it is important to remember that the area can be subject to hazards and disasters.
- Hazards and disasters, such as drought, wildfire, or flash flooding, can occur without much forewarning.
- Some residents have expressed their fears or concerns about wildfires and drought in particular.
- El Paso County and all of Colorado strive to be resilient and provide a safe place for residents to live.
- Identifying risks is an important first step for establishing appropriate strategies to deal with hazards.

### Staying Prepared

- Emergency response planning in El Paso County is conducted by a joint agency (Pikes Peak Regional OEM), which enables coordination across the County region.
- Increasing fire response times for development in outlying parts of the County is a key concern along with general access to emergency services.
- Coordination with emergency management planners (OEM) and emergency service providers (fire, sheriff, EMS) is an important consideration for the County as it changes, grows, and develops.
- Rapid response and recovery, communication, and involvement of the community, are ongoing considerations for the County to stay prepared in the face of hazards or disasters.

### Planning for Resiliency

- Proactive planning to mitigate, organize a response, or prevent hazards or disaster occurrences can help lessen the negative impacts faced by the County in the future.
- Protecting sensitive areas, and improving the quality and performance of development in El Paso County, are important considerations for resiliency and sustainable development.
- Opportunities for coordination and partnerships for resiliency requires participation from everyone, including federal, state, local, nonprofit, private, and community members.
- Communities become more resilient by identifying assessing risks, pursuing an appropriate set of tools and strategies, and implementing those strategies.

